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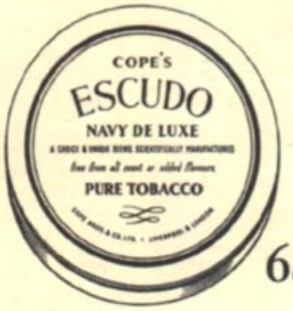

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Jorge Luis Borges

The Circular Ruins

And if he left off dreaming about you . . .
—THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS, VI.

NO ONE saw him disembark in the unanimous night, no one saw the bamboo canoe sink into the sacred mud, but in a few days there was no one who did not know that the taciturn man came from the South and that his home had been one of those numberless villages upstream in the deeply cleft side of the mountain, where the Zend language has not been contaminated by Greek and where leprosy is infrequent. What is certain is that the grey man kissed the mud, climbed up the bank without pushing aside (probably, without feeling) the blades which were lacerating his flesh, and crawled, nauseated and bloodstained, up to the circular enclosure crowned with a stone tiger or horse, which sometimes was the colour of flame and now was that of ashes. This circle was a temple which had been devoured by ancient fires, profaned by the miasmal jungle, and whose god no longer received the homage of men. The stranger stretched himself out beneath the pedestal. He was awakened by the sun high overhead. He was not astonished to find that his wounds had healed; he closed his pallid eyes and slept, not through weakness of flesh but through determination of will. He knew that this temple was the place required for his invincible intent; he knew that the incessant trees had not succeeded in strangling the ruins of another propitious temple downstream which had once belonged to gods now burned and dead; he knew that his immediate obligation was to dream. Towards midnight he was awakened by the inconsolable shriek of a bird. Tracks of bare feet, some figs and a jug warned him that the men of the region had been spying respectfully on his sleep, soliciting his protection or afraid of his magic. He felt a chill of fear, and sought out a sepulchral niche in the dilapidated wall where he concealed himself among unfamiliar leaves.

The purpose which guided him was not impossible, though supernatural. He wanted to dream a man; he wanted to dream him in minute entirety and impose him on reality. This magic project had exhausted the entire expanse of his mind; if someone had asked him his name or to relate some event of his former life, he would not have been able to give an answer. This uninhabited, ruined temple suited him, for it contained a minimum of visible world; the proximity of the workmen also suited him, for they took it upon themselves to provide for his frugal needs. The rice and fruit they brought him were nourishment enough for his body, which was consecrated to the sole task of sleeping and dreaming.

At first, his dreams were chaotic; then in

A FIRST *story by Borges ("The Babylonian Lottery") which we published last month caused, we are told, a "minor sensation" in some readers' circles. These two stories have been translated by Anthony Bonner and Anthony Kerrigan (respectively). An edition of the work of this brilliant Argentinian writer is being prepared by Weidenfeld & Nicolson.*

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a short while they became dialectic in nature. The stranger dreamed that he was in the centre of a circular amphitheatre which was more or less the burnt temple; clouds of taciturn students filled the tiers of seats; the faces of the farthest ones hung at a distance of many centuries and as high as the stars, but their features were completely precise. The man lectured his pupils on anatomy, cosmography, and magic: the faces listened anxiously and tried to answer understandingly, as if they guessed the importance of that examination which would redeem one of them from his condition of empty illusion and interpolate him into the real world. Asleep or awake, the man thought over the answers of his phantoms, did not allow himself to be deceived by impostors, and in certain perplexities he sensed a growing intelligence. He was seeking a soul worthy of participating in the universe.

After nine or ten nights he understood with a certain bitterness that he could expect nothing from those pupils who accepted his doctrine passively, but that he could expect something from those who occasionally dared to oppose him. The former group, although worthy of love and affection, could not ascend to the level of individuals; the latter pre-existed to a slightly greater degree. One afternoon (now afternoons were also given over to sleep, now he was only awake for a couple of hours at daybreak) he dismissed the vast illusory student body for good and kept only one pupil. He was a taciturn, sallow boy, at times intractable, and whose sharp features resembled those of his dreamer. The brusque elimination of his fellow students did not disconcert him for long; after a few private lessons, his progress was enough to astound the teacher. Nevertheless, a catastrophe took place. One day, the man emerged from his sleep as if from a viscous desert, looked at the useless afternoon light which he immediately confused with the dawn, and understood that he had not dreamed. All that night and all day long, the intolerable lucidity of insomnia fell upon him. He tried exploring the forest, to lose his strength; among the hemlock he barely succeeded in experiencing several short snatches of sleep, veined with fleeting, rudimentary visions that were useless. He tried to assemble the student body but scarcely had he articulated a few brief words of exhortation when it became deformed and was then erased. In his almost perpetual vigil, tears of anger burned his old eyes.

He understood that modelling the incoherent and vertiginous matter of which dreams are composed was the most difficult task that a man could undertake, even though he should penetrate all the enigmas of a superior and inferior order; much more difficult than weaving a rope out of sand or coining the faceless wind. He swore he would forget the enormous hallucination which had thrown him off at first, and he sought another method of work. Before putting it into execution, he spent a month recovering his strength, which had been squandered by his delirium. He abandoned all premeditation of dreaming and almost immediately succeeded in sleeping a reasonable part of each day. The few times that he had dreams during this period, he paid no attention to them. Before resuming his task, he waited until the moon's disc was perfect. Then, in the afternoon, he purified himself in the waters of the river, worshipped the planetary gods, pronounced the prescribed syllables of a mighty name, and went to sleep. He dreamed almost immediately, with his heart throbbing.

He dreamed that it was warm, secret, about the size of a clenched fist, and of a garnet colour within the penumbra of a human body as yet without face or sex; during fourteen lucid nights he dreamt of it with meticulous love. Every night he perceived it more clearly. He did not touch it; he only permitted himself to witness it, to observe it, and occasionally to rectify it with a glance. He perceived it and lived it from all angles and distances. On the fourteenth night he lightly touched the pulmonary artery with his index finger, then the whole

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heart, outside and inside. He was satisfied with the examination. He deliberately did not dream for a night; he then took up the heart again, invoked the name of a planet, and undertook the vision of another of the principal organs. Within a year he had come to the skeleton and the eyelids. The innumerable hair was perhaps the most difficult task. He dreamed an entire man—a young man, but who did not sit up or talk, who was unable to open his eyes. Night after night, the man dreamt him asleep.

In the Gnostic cosmogonies, demiurges fashion a red Adam who cannot stand; as clumsy, crude, and elemental as this Adam of dust was the Adam of dreams forged by the wizard's nights. One afternoon, the man almost destroyed his entire work, but then changed his mind. (It would have been better had he destroyed it.) When he had exhausted all supplications to the deities of the earth, he threw himself at the feet of the effigy which was perhaps a tiger or perhaps a colt and implored its unknown help. That evening, at twilight, he dreamt of the statue. He dreamt it was alive, tremulous: it was not an atrocious bastard of a tiger and a colt, but at the same time these two fiery creatures and also a bull, a rose, and a storm. This multiple god revealed to him that his earthly name was Fire, and that in this circular temple (and in others like it) people had once made sacrifices to him and worshipped him, and that he would magically animate the dreamed phantom, in such a way that all creatures, except Fire itself and the dreamer, would believe it to be a man of flesh and blood. He commanded that once this man had been instructed in all the rites, he should be sent to the other ruined temple whose pyramids were still standing downstream, so that some voice would glorify him in that deserted edifice. In the dream of the man that dreamed, the dreamed one awoke.

The wizard carried out the orders he had been given. He devoted a certain length of time (which finally proved to be two years) to instructing him in the mysteries of the universe and the cult of fire. Secretly, he was pained at the idea of being separated from him. On the pretext of pedagogical necessity, each day he increased the number of hours dedicated to dreaming. He also remade the right shoulder, which was somewhat defective. At times, he was disturbed by the impression that all this had already happened.... In general, his days were happy; when he closed his eyes, he thought: *Now I will be with my son.* Or, more rarely: *The son I have engendered is waiting for me and will not exist if I do not go to him.*

Gradually, he began accustoming him to reality. Once he ordered him to place a flag on a faraway peak. The next day the flag was fluttering on the peak. He tried other analogous experiments, each time more audacious. With a certain bitterness, he understood that his son was ready to be born —and perhaps impatient. That night he kissed him for the first time and sent him off to the other temple whose remains were turning white downstream, across many miles of inextricable jungle and marshes. Before doing this (and so that his son should never know that he was a phantom, so that he should think himself a man like any other) he destroyed in him all memory of his years of apprenticeship.

His victory and peace became blurred with boredom. In the twilight times of dusk and dawn, he would prostrate himself before the stone figure, perhaps imagining his unreal son carrying out identical rites in other circular ruins downstream; at night he no longer dreamed, or dreamed as any man does. His perceptions of the sounds and forms of the universe became somewhat pallid: his absent son was being nourished by these diminutions of his soul. The purpose of his life had been fulfilled; the man remained in a kind of ecstasy. After a certain time, which some chroniclers prefer to compute in years and others in decades, two oarsmen awoke him at midnight; he could not see their faces, but they spoke to him of a charmed man in a temple of the North, capable of walking on fire without

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burning himself. The wizard suddenly remembered the words of the god. He remembered that of all the creatures that people the earth, Fire was the only one who knew his son to be a phantom. This memory, which at first calmed him, ended by tormenting him. He feared lest his son should meditate on this abnormal privilege and by some means find out he was a mere simulacrum. Not to be a man, to be a projection of another man's dreams—what an incomparable humiliation, what madness! Any father is interested in the sons he has procreated (or permitted) out of the mere confusion of happiness; it was natural that the wizard should fear for the future of that son whom he had thought out entrail by entrail, feature by feature, in a thousand and one secret nights.

His misgivings ended abruptly, but not without certain forewarnings. First (after a long drought) a remote cloud, as light as a bird, appeared on a hill; then, towards the South, the sky took on the rose colour of leopards' gums; then came clouds of smoke which rusted the metal of the nights; afterwards came the panic-stricken flight of wild animals. For what had happened many centuries before was repeating itself. The ruins of the sanctuary of the god of Fire was destroyed by fire. In a dawn without birds, the wizard saw the concentric fire licking the walls. For a moment, he thought of taking refuge in the water, but then he understood that death was coming to crown his old age and absolve him from his labours. He walked towards the sheets of flame. They did not bite his flesh, they caressed him and flooded him without heat or combustion. With relief, with humiliation, with terror, he understood that he also was an illusion, that someone else was dreaming him.

The Library of Babel

By this art you may contemplate the variation of the 23 letters...
—THE ANATOMY OF MELANCHOLY,
Part 2, Sect. II, Mem. IV.

THE universe (which others call the Library) is composed of an indefinite, perhaps an infinite, number of hexagonal galleries, with enormous ventilation shafts in the middle, encircled by very low railings. From any hexagon the upper or lower stories are visible, interminably. The distribution of the galleries is invariable. Twenty shelves—five long shelves per side—cover all sides except two; their height, which is that of each floor, scarcely exceeds that of an average librarian. One of the free sides gives upon a narrow entrance way, which leads to another gallery, identical to the first and to all the others. To the left and to the right of the entrance way are two miniature rooms. One allows standing room for sleeping; the other, the satisfaction of fæcal necessities. Through this section passes the spiral staircase, which plunges down into the abyss and rises up to the heights. In the entrance way hangs a mirror, which faithfully duplicates appearances. People are in the habit of inferring from this mirror that the Library is not infinite (if it really were, why this illusory duplication?); I prefer to dream that the polished surfaces feign and promise infinity....

Light comes from some spherical fruits called by the name of lamps. There are two, running transversally, in each hexagon. The light they emit is insufficient, incessant.

Like all men of the Library, I have travelled in my youth. I have journeyed in search of a book, perhaps of the catalogue of catalogues; now that my eyes can scarcely decipher what I write, I am preparing to die a few leagues from the hexagon in which I was born. Once dead, there will not lack pious hands to hurl me over the banister;

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my sepulchre shall be the unfathomable air: my body will sink lengthily and will corrupt and dissolve in the wind engendered by the fall, which is infinite. I affirm that the Library is interminable. The idealists argue that the hexagonal halls are a necessary form of absolute space or, at least, of our intuition of space. They contend that a triangular or pentagonal hall is inconceivable. (The mystics claim that to them ecstasy reveals a round chamber containing a great book with a continuous back circling the walls of the room; but their testimony is suspect; their words, obscure. That cyclical book is God.) Let it suffice me, for the time being, to repeat the classic dictum: *The Library is a sphere whose consummate centre is any hexagon, and whose circumference is inaccessible.*

Five shelves correspond to each one of the walls of each hexagon; each shelf contains thirty-two books of a uniform format; each book is made up of four hundred and ten pages; each page, of forty lines; each line, of some eighty black letters. There are also letters on the spine of each book; these letters do not indicate or prefigure what the pages will say. I know that such a lack of relevance, at one time, seemed mysterious. Before summarising the solution (whose disclosure, despite its tragic implications, is perhaps the capital fact of this history), I want to recall certain axioms.

The first: The Library exists *ab aeterno*. No reasonable mind can doubt this truth, whose immediate corollary is the future eternity of the world. Man, the imperfect librarian, may be the work of chance or of malevolent demiurges; the universe, with its elegant endowment of shelves, of enigmatic volumes, of indefatigable ladders for the voyager, and of privies for the seated librarian, can only be the work of a god. In order to perceive the distance which exists between the divine and the human, it is enough to compare the rude tremulous symbols which my fallible hand scribbles on the end pages of a book with the organic letters inside: exact, delicate, intensely black, inimitably symmetric.

The second: *The number of orthographic symbols is twenty-five.*[1] This bit of evidence permitted the formulation, three hundred years ago, of a general theory of the Library and the satisfactory resolution of the problem which no conjecture had yet made clear: the formless and chaotic nature of almost all books. One of these books, which my father saw in a hexagon of the circuit number fifteen ninety-four, was composed of the letters MCV perversely repeated from the first line to the last. Another, very much consulted in this zone, is a mere labyrinth of letters, but on the next-to-the-last page, one may read *O Time your pyramids*. As is well known: for one reasonable line or one straightforward note there are leagues of insensate cacophony, of verbal farragos and incoherencies. (I know of a wild region whose librarians repudiate the vain superstitious custom of seeking any sense in books and compare it to looking for meaning in dreams or in the chaotic lines of one's hands. . . . They admit that the inventors of writing imitated the twenty-five natural symbols, but they maintain that this application is accidental and that books in themselves mean nothing. This opinion—we shall see—is not altogether false.)

For a long time it was believed that these impenetrable books belonged to past or remote languages. It is true that the most ancient men, the first librarians, made use of a language quite different from the one we speak to-day; it is true that some miles to the right the language is dialectical and that ninety stories up it is incomprehensible. All this, I repeat, is true, but four hundred and ten pages of unvarying MCVs do not correspond to any language, however dialectical or rudimentary it might be. Some librarians insinuated that each letter could influence the next, and that the value of MCV on the

[1] The original manuscript of the present note does not contain digits or capital letters. The punctuation is limited to the comma and the period. These two signs, plus the space sign and the twenty-two letters of the alphabet, make up the twenty-five sufficient symbols enumerated by the unknown author.

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third line of page 71 was not the same as that of the same series in another position on another page; but this vague thesis did not prosper. Still other men thought in terms of cryptographs; this conjecture has come to be universally accepted, though not in the sense in which it was formulated by its inventors.

Five hundred years ago, the chief of an upper hexagon[2] came upon a book as confusing as all the rest but which contained nearly two pages of homogenous lines. He showed his find to an ambulant decipherer, who told him the lines were written in Portuguese. Others told him they were in Yiddish. In less than a century the nature of the language was finally established: it was a Samoyed-Lithuanian dialect of Guaraní, with classical Arabic inflections. The contents were also deciphered: notions of combinational analysis, illustrated by examples of variations with unlimited repetition. These examples made it possible for a librarian of genius to discover the fundamental law of the Library. This thinker observed that all the books, however diverse, are made up of uniform elements: the period, the comma, the space, the twenty-two letters of the alphabet. He also adduced a circumstance confirmed by all travellers: *There are not, in the whole vast Library, two identical books.* From all these incontrovertible premises he deduced that the Library is total and that its shelves contain all the possible combinations of the twenty-odd orthographic symbols (whose number, though vast, is not infinite); that is, everything which can be expressed, in all languages. Everything is there: the minute history of the future, the autobiographies of the archangels, the faithful catalogue of the Library, thousands and thousands of false catalogues, a demonstration of the fallacy of these catalogues, a demonstration of the fallacy of the true catalogue, the Gnostic gospel of Basilides, the commentary on this gospel, the commentary on the commentary of this gospel, the veridical account of your death, a version of each book in all languages, the interpolations of every book in all books.

[2] Formerly, for each three hexagons there was one man. Suicide and pulmonary diseases have destroyed this proportion. My memory recalls scenes of unspeakable melancholy: there have been many nights when I have ventured down corridors and polished staircases without encountering a single librarian.

When it was proclaimed that the Library comprised all books, the first impression was one of extravagant joy. All men felt themselves lords of a secret, intact treasure. There was no personal or universal problem whose eloquent solution did not exist—in some hexagon. The universe was justified, the universe suddenly expanded to the limitless dimensions of hope. At that time there was much talk of the Vindications: books of apology and prophecy, which vindicated for all time the actions of every man in the world and established a store of prodigious arcana for the future. Thousands of covetous persons abandoned their dear natal hexagons and crowded up the stairs, urged on by the vain aim of finding their Vindication. These pilgrims disputed in the narrow corridors, hurled dark maledictions, strangled each other on the divine stairways, flung the deceitful books to the bottom of the tunnels, and died as they were thrown into space by men from remote regions. Some went mad....

The Vindications do exist. I have myself seen two of these books, which were concerned with future people, people who were perhaps not imaginary. But the searchers did not remember that the calculable possibility of a man's finding his own book, or some perfidious variation of his own book, is close to zero.

The clarification of the basic mysteries of humanity—the origin of the Library and of time—was also expected. It is credible that those grave mysteries can be explained in words: if the language of the philosophers does not suffice, the multiform Library will have produced the unexpected language required and the necessary vocabularies and grammars for this language.

It is now four centuries since men have been wearying the hexagons....

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THERE are official searchers, *inquisitors*. I have observed them carrying out their functions: they are always exhausted. They speak of a staircase without steps where they were almost killed. They speak of galleries and stairs with the local librarian. From time to time they will pick up the nearest book and leaf through its pages, in search of infamous words. Obviously, no one expects to discover anything.

The uncommon hope was followed, naturally enough, by deep depression. The certainty that some shelf in some hexagon contained precious books and that these books were inaccessible seemed almost intolerable. A blasphemous sect suggested that all searches be given up and that men everywhere shuffle letters and symbols until they succeeded in composing, by means of an improbable stroke of luck, the canonical books. The authorities found themselves obliged to issue severe orders. The sect disappeared, but in my childhood I still saw old men who would hide out in the privies for long periods of time, and, with metal discs in a forbidden dicebox, feebly mimic the divine disorder.

Other men, inversely, thought that the primary task was to eliminate useless works. They would invade the hexagons, exhibiting credentials which were not always false, skim through a volume with annoyance, and then condemn entire bookshelves to destruction: their ascetic, hygienic fury is responsible for the senseless loss of millions of books. Their name is execrated; but those who mourn the "treasures" destroyed by this frenzy, overlook two notorious facts. One: the Library is so enormous that any reduction undertaken by humans is infinitesimal. Two: each book is unique, irreplaceable, but (inasmuch as the Library is total) there are always several hundreds of thousands of imperfect facsimiles—of works which differ only by one letter or one comma. Contrary to public opinion, I dare suppose that the consequences of the depredations committed by the Purifiers have been exaggerated by the horror which these fanatics provoked. They were spurred by the delirium of storming the books in the Crimson Hexagon: books of a smaller than ordinary format, omnipotent, illustrated, magical.

We know, too, of another superstition of that time: the Man of the Book. In some shelf of some hexagon, men reasoned, there must exist a book which is the cipher and perfect compendium of *all the rest*: some librarian has perused it, and it is analogous to a god. Vestiges of the worship of that remote functionary still persist in the language of this zone. Many pilgrimages have sought Him out. For a century they trod the most diverse routes in vain. How to locate the secret hexagon which harboured it? Someone proposed a regressive approach: in order to locate book A, first consult book B which will indicate the location of A; in order to locate book B, first consult book C, and so on *ad infinitum*. . . .

I have squandered and consumed my years in adventures of this type. To me, it does not seem unlikely that on some shelf of the universe there lies a total book.[3] I pray the unknown gods that some man—even if only one man, and though it have been thousands of years ago!—may have examined and read it. If honour and wisdom and happiness are not for me, let them be for others. May heaven exist, though my place be in hell. Let me be outraged and annihilated, but may Thy enormous Library be justified, for one instant, in one being.

THE impious assert that absurdities are the norm in the Library and that anything reasonable (even humble and pure coherence) is an almost miraculous exception. They speak (I know) of "the febrile Library, whose hazardous volumes run the constant risk of being changed into others and in which everything is affirmed, denied, and confused as by a divinity in delirium."

[3] I repeat: it is enough that a book be possible for it to exist. Only the impossible is excluded. For example: no book is also a stairway, though doubtless there are books that discuss and deny and demonstrate this possibility and others whose structure corresponds to that of a stairway.

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These words, which not only denounce disorder but exemplify it as well, manifestly demonstrate the bad taste of the speakers and their desperate ignorance. Actually, the Library includes all verbal structures, all the variations allowed by the twenty-five orthographic symbols, but it does not permit of one absolute absurdity. It is pointless to observe that the best book in the numerous hexagons under my administration is entitled *Combed Clap of Thunder*; or that another is called *The Plaster Cramp*; and still another *Axaxaxas Mlö*. Such propositions as are contained in these titles, at first sight incoherent, doubtless yield a cryptographic or allegorical justification. Since they are verbal, these justifications already figure, *ex hypothesi*, in the Library. I cannot combine certain letters, as *dhcmrlchtdj*, which the divine Library has not already foreseen in combination, and which in one of its secret languages does not encompass some terrible meaning. No one can articulate a syllable which is not full of tenderness and fear, and which is not, in one of those languages, the powerful name of some god. To speak is to fall into tautologies. This useless and wordy epistle itself already exists in one of the thirty volumes of the five shelves in one of the uncountable hexagons—and so does its refutation. (An *n* number of possible languages makes use of the same vocabulary; in some of them, the symbol *library* admits of the correct definition *ubiquitous and everlasting system of hexagonal galleries*, but *library* is *bread* or *pyramid* or anything else, and the seven words which define it possess another value. You who read me, are you sure you understand my language?)

METHODICAL writing distracts me from the present condition of men. But the certainty that everything has been already written nullifies or makes phantoms of us all. I know of districts where the youth prostrate themselves before books and barbarously kiss the pages, though they do not know how to make out a single letter. Epidemics, heretical disagreements, the pilgrimages which inevitably degenerate into banditry, have decimated the population. I believe I have mentioned the suicides, more frequent each year. Perhaps I am deceived by old age and fear, but I suspect that the human species—the unique human species—is on the road to extinction, while the Library will last on forever: illuminated, solitary, infinite, perfectly immovable, filled with precious volumes, useless, incorruptible, secret.

Infinite I have just written. I have not interpolated this adjective merely from rhetorical habit. It is not illogical, I say, to think that the world is infinite. Those who judge it to be limited, postulate that in remote places the corridors and stairs and hexagons could inconceivably cease—a manifest absurdity. Those who imagined it to be limitless forget that the possible number of books is limited. I dare insinuate the following solution to this ancient problem: *The Library is limitless and periodic.* If an eternal voyager were to traverse it in any direction, he would find, after many centuries, that the same volumes are repeated in the same disorder (which, repeated, would constitute an order: Order itself). My solitude rejoices in this elegant hope.[4]

[4] Letizia Alvarez de Toledo has observed that the vast Library is useless. Strictly speaking, *one single volume* should suffice: a single volume of ordinary format, printed in nine or ten type body, and consisting of an infinite number of infinitely thin pages. (At the beginning of the 17th century, Cavalieri said that any solid body is the superposition of an infinite number of planes.) This silky *vade-mecum* would scarcely be handy: each apparent leaf of the book would divide into other analogous leaves. The inconceivable central leaf would have no reverse.

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Vladimir Nabokov

Pushkin and Gannibal

A Footnote

ABRAM GANNIBAL

Will it come the hour of my freedom?
Time, time!—I call to it;
I roam above the sea, I wait for the weather,
I beckon to the sails of ships.
Under the cope of storms, with waves disputing,
on the free crossway of the sea
when shall I start on my free course?
Time to leave the dull shore
of a to me inimical element,
and 'mid the meridian swell,
beneath the sky of my Africa,
to sigh for sombre Russia,
where I suffered, where I loved,
where my heart I buried.

EUGENE ONEGIN

PUSHKIN's Note to *Eugene Onegin*, based mainly on the MS biography in German of his maternal great-grandfather, reads:

The author, on his mother's side, is of African descent. His great-grandfather, Abram Petrovich Annibal,* in his eighth year was kidnapped on the coast of Africa and brought to Constantinople. The Russian envoy, having rescued him, sent him as a gift to Peter the Great, who had him baptised in Vilno. In his wake, his brother arrived, first in Constantinople, and then in St. Petersburg, with the offer to ransom him; but Peter I did not consent to return his godchild. Up to an advanced age, Annibal still remembered Africa, the sumptuous life of his father, and nineteen brothers, of whom [sic] he was the youngest; he remembered how they used to be led into his father's presence with their hands bound behind their backs, whilst he alone remained free and went swimming under the fountains of the paternal home; he also remembered his beloved sister, *Lagan*,† swimming in the distance after the ship in which he was receding.

At eighteen, Annibal was sent by the tsar to France, where he began his military service in the army of the regent; he returned to Russia with a slashed head and the rank of French lieutenant. Thenceforth he remained continually near the person of the tsar. In the reign of Anna, Annibal, a personal enemy of Bühren, was dispatched, under a specious pretext, to Siberia. Getting bored with an unpeopled place and a harsh climate, he returned to St. Petersburg of his own accord and appeared before his friend Münnich. Münnich was amazed and advised him to go into hiding without delay. Annibal retired to his country estates and dwelled there all through the reign of Anna, while nominally serving in Siberia. When Elizabeth ascended the throne, she lavished her favours upon him. A. P. Annibal lived to see the reign of Catherine II, when, relieved of important duties of office, he ended his days with the rank of general in chief, dying in his ninety-second year in 1781.

His son, Lieutenant General I. A. Annibal, undoubtedly belongs to the number of the most distinguished men of Catherine's age. He died in 1800.

In Russia, where the memory of eminent men

THE *following sketch, which deals mainly with the mysterious origin of Pushkin's African ancestor, has no pretensions to settle the many difficulties encountered on the way. It is the outcome of a few odd moments spent in the admirable libraries of Cornell and Harvard Universities, and its purpose is merely to draw attention to the riddles that other workers have either ignored or answered wrongly. Although in several instances I have keenly felt the want of original documents, preserved in Russia (where, it seems, they are inaccessible even to native Pushkinians), I am consoled by the fact that any material pertaining to any research is incomparably easier to obtain in the institutions of a free country than in those of a wary police state. It has been abridged from a longer scholarly study.* V. N.

* This is the French form of the English and German "Hannibal" and of the Russian "Gannibal" or "Ganibal"; we should constantly bear in mind that our poet's classical education was entirely dependent on French versions of, and French commentaries to, the ancients.

† An inept, albeit traditional, Russian transliteration; the name is spelled "Lahann" in the German biography.

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is soon obliterated owing to the absence of historical memoirs, the bizarre life of Annibal is known only through family tradition.

On the Russian nobility side, Pushkin's family name can be traced back to one Konstantin Pushkin, born in the early 15th century, younger son of a Grigoriy Pushka. From Konstantin, there is a direct line of descent to Pyotr Pushkin (d. 1692), the ancestor of both parents of our poet (the paternal great-grandfather of his father and the maternal great-great-grandfather of his mother).*

The basic documents regarding Abram Gannibal's origins are:

The petition: a clerical copy of a petition addressed in February, 1742 (*i.e.*, in the reign of Elizabeth, Peter's daughter), by Major General Abram Gannibal, *ober-komendant* of Revel, or Reval (now Tallin), N.W. Russia, to the Senate, applying for a nobleman's diploma and heraldic arms.

The German biography: ff. 40–45 of a manuscript some 4,000 words long (classified in the Lenin State Library, Moscow, as Cahier 2387A, which is a batch of sheets sewn together, to form a book, by the police immediately after Pushkin's death), comprising an anonymous biography of Abram Gannibal, written in a small Gothic hand, and pompously worded in idiomatic but none-too-literate German. All we know about this German biography (the MS of which I have not seen) is that it was written after Abram Gannibal's death (1781); that it contains certain details, such as a few names and dates, that only Gannibal would have remembered; and that it also includes a number of passages, contradicted either by historical documents (such as Gannibal's own petition) or by plain logic, that were obviously inserted by the biographer with a view to pad the story, to span its gaps, and to give a eulogistic (but actually absurd) interpretation of this or that event in the hero's life. I think, therefore, that whoever spun this grotesque fabric had before his or her eyes some autobiographic notes left by Gannibal himself. The German seems to me to be that of a Rigan or Revalan. It may be the work of some Livonian or Scandinavian relative of Mme. Gannibal (née Schöberg). The bad grammar seems to preclude its being a professional genealogist's job.

Pushkin's Note to *Eugene Onegin* (mainly based on the biography, but with some new details supplied by family tradition or romantic imagination) has already been quoted.

We have in addition four items, curious and important in themselves, but not casting any new light on the subject: (1) an anonymous, very clumsy and incomplete, Russian version of the German biography, on ff. 28–29 and 56–58 of the same Cahier 2387A, in Pushkin's hand, but obviously dictated to him, judging by the uncouth style, probably in October, 1824, and certainly not later than the end of the year, by someone who had more German than he, with some desultory marginalia by Pushkin; (2) a very brief *curriculum vitae*, written or dictated to somebody by Pyotr Gannibal in his old age,† when he lived near the Pushkins' Mihaylovskoe, at his small countryseat, Petrovskoe; (3) a few words concerning Abram in a genealogical note, written by Pushkin in the early 1830s, known as *Rodoslovnaya Pushkinih i Ganibalov*, in which a short passage concerning Gannibal begins: "My maternal great-grandfather was a Negro . . ."; and (4) the factual as faintly seen through the fictional in Pushkin's unfinished historical romance (1827), six chapters and the beginning of a seventh, published posthumously (1837) as *Arap Petra Velikogo* (The Blackamoor of Peter the Great), in which Abram appears as Ibragim (Ibrahim, Turkish form of Abraham).

Our poet had no chronological information regarding his great-grandfather's origin and youth.

* Pyotr Pushkin's son, Aleksandr (d. 1727), was the father of Lev (d. 1790), who was the father of Sergey (1770–1848), who married Nadezha Gannibal (1775–1836) in 1796 and fathered our poet, Aleksandr Pushkin (1799–1837).

Pyotr Pushkin's younger son, Fyodor (d. 1728), was the father of Aleksey (d. 1777), who was the father of Maria (d. 1818). Maria Pushkin married Osip Gannibal (1744–1806), third son of Avraam Petrov, alias Gannibal, a Russianised African (1693?–1781). Osip's and Maria's daughter, Nadezhda, married Sergey Pushkin (her mother's second cousin) and was our poet's mother.

Abram (Avram, Avraam, Ibragim) Petrovich, or Petrov (baptismal patronymic), Annibal, or Gannibal, or Ganibal (assumed surname), hereafter referred to as *"Abram Gannibal,"* had eleven children by his second wife, Christina Regine von (?) Schöberk, or Scheberch (b. 1706, d. two months before her husband): among them, Ivan Gannibal (1731?–1801), a distinguished general; Pyotr Gannibal (1742–1825?), artillery officer and country squire; Osip Gannibal (1744–1806), also a military man of sorts, our poet's maternal grandfather (in 1773 he married Maria Pushkin, second cousin of Sergey Pushkin); and two obscurer Gannibals, Isaak (1747–1804) and Yakov (b. 1749).

The following notes, in so far as my own research goes, mainly concern the origins and the first third of Abram Gannibal's life.

† In a letter dated Aug. 11, 1825, Pushkin wrote to his country neighbour, Praskovia Osipov: "I plan to look up my old Negro great-uncle, who, I suspect, will die one of these days: I am anxious to obtain from him certain memoirs regarding my great-grandfather." Was this all he was able to get?

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When beginning (1827) his historical romance *Arap Petra Velikogo*, Pushkin attempted to calculate Gannibal's birth and death dates from the scanty and conflicting data of the German biography (ff. 28 in the batch of sheets in the order in which they were posthumously sewed), our poet computed that if Abram was twenty-eight in 1725 (which would make him only eighty-four at the time of his death), he must have been born in 1697, and at the age of nine (in accordance with the statement in the German biography, a statement that might have set the numerative ball rolling in the first place) was brought to Russia in "1708" (either a mere slip for the correct 1706 or wishful miscalculation). Like many great men, Pushkin was a sedulous and wretched mathematician.

In another abstruse task—namely, at the top of the fourth page of the abridged Russian version of the German biography dictated to him (2387A, f. 56)—our poet apparently attempted to find the date of Gannibal's birth if, say, he were not twenty-eight, but twenty-six, in 1725. He discovered this to be 1699 and, adding nine, obtained the desired "1708," the year in which he thought that Gannibal had been baptised immediately upon his arrival in Russia.

A cryptic note in the right-hand corner of the second page reads: "brought [to Constantinople] [1]696," which is evidently the result of reckoning based on the fact that the German biography says that Gannibal was seven when removed from Abyssinia and ninety-two at the time of his death. We do not know how Pushkin coped with the awkward mathematical consequence that makes the little Moor spend ten years in the Sultan's seraglio and appear as a gangling youth of seventeen before the tsar in Moscow.

Gannibal's Origin

THE GERMAN biography begins: "Awraam Petrowitsch Hannibal war . . . von Geburt ein Afrikanischer Mohr [a blackamoor, an African black] aus Abyssinien. . . ." This fact therefore was known to Pushkin (who took down the Russian translation), but nowhere in his own notes does he ever refer to a specific region when speaking of his ancestor.

Aleksey Vulf, in an entry in his journal, mentions retrospectively that Pushkin showed him, on Sept. 15, 1827, at Mihaylovskoe, "the two first chapters he has just written of a romance in prose [now known as *Arap Petra Velikogo*], in which the main character represents his great-grandfather Gannibal, the son of an Abyssinian emir, captured by the Turks and sent from Constantinople by the Russian ambassador as a gift to Peter I, who had him educated and grew very fond of him."

In the Russian version of the German biography our poet's unknown dictamentor translates "Afrikanischer Mohr" "African Negro." And the German biography itself, in a further passage, refers to Gannibal as a *Neger*.

Abyssinians (or Ethiopians, in the strict sense) have a skin colour varying from dusky to black. Their type represents a Hamito-Semitic component of the Caucasian race; and a Negroid strain may so strongly predominate in some tribes that the term "Negro" is in such cases applicable in a general sense; but apart from these considerations (to which I shall return at the end of these notes), the European layman of the time—and, in fact, Abram Gannibal himself—would classify colloquially as a "Negro" or "blackamoor" (in Russian, *negr* or *arap*—note the ultima) any more or less dark-skinned African who was not an Egyptian and not an Arab (in Russian, *arab*).

In his brief *curriculum vitae*, in badly misspelled Russian, written or more probably dictated in his dotage, Pyotr Gannibal makes the following statement (probably in the autumn of 1825, when our poet presumably consulted him):

> My father . . . was a Negro; his father was of noble origin; that is, a ruling seigneur. My father was taken as an *amanat* [a Caucasian term meaning "hostage"] to the court in Constantinople, whence he was stolen and dispatched to Tsar Peter I.

The German biography continues thus:

> [He was] the son of a local ruler, powerful and rich, who proudly traced his descent in direct line from the house of the famed Hannibal, the terror of Rome. [Abram's] father was a vassal of the Turkish emperor or the Ottoman Empire who by the end of the preceding century, because of oppression and molestation [*Druck und Belästigung*], had revolted, with other Abyssinian princes, his countrymen and allies, against his overlord, the sultan; whereupon various petty but bloody wars followed, in which, however, might eventually triumphed, and this Hannibal [Abram], still a boy, the youngest son of the ruling prince, with other highborn youths, was sent in his eighth year to Constantinople as a hostage. Although, given his youth, this fate should not have befallen him so early, still, owing to the fact that his father, according to the Moslem custom, had very many wives (even up to about thirty, with a correspondingly large progeny), the numerous old princesses and their children joined forces in the common intention of protecting themselves and their offspring; and since Abram was the youngest son of one of the youngest wives, who did not have at court as many supporters [as the elder princesses had], these contrived through trickery and intrigue, almost by force, to put him on a Turkish vessel and turned him over to the fate that had been assigned him.

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I shall presently show that in the 1690s, the period referred to here, no Abyssinian was a vassal of the Ottoman Porte, and no Abyssinian prince could have been a Moslem or could have been forced to send any tribute to Constantinople. The "terror of Rome" will also be discussed. But before I attempt to clear up all this muddle, let us glance at the geographical situation.

Gannibal's Birthplace

ABRAM GANNIBAL'S petition (1742) contains the following brief but important information:

> I am a native of Africa, of the high nobility there. I was born in the demesne of my father, in the town of Lagona [or Lagono or Lagon: *v gorode Lagone*—this is the locative case, which in Russian does not disclose the ultima of the nominative]. Moreover, my father had under his rule two other towns....

It will be noted that no particular region in Africa is indicated in the petition. I assume that this town is in Abyssinia. On the strength of the German biography, the locative case, as already stated, does not provide one with any clue to the orthography of the nominative; moreover, the ridiculous Russian custom of transliterating both *h* and *g* by means of a Russian gamma does not tell us whether this African name in a Roman transcription* should be "Lagon," "Lahon," "Lagona," "Lahona," "Lagono," or "Lahono." I suspect that "Lahona" is the correct transcription of the unknown original but shall further refer to the place as "L." The similarity between the name of the sister mentioned in the German biography and the name of the native town mentioned only in the petition is very disturbing. I have not found—within the limited scope of my reading—any instance of an Abyssinian child receiving the name of its birthplace.

In the course of a work that in its historical, ethnical, and geo-nomenclatorial portions is below criticism, Dmitri Anuchin (1899), an anthropologising journalist, states that after talking to a "French traveller, Saint-Yves" (Georges Saint-Yves?), and to "Professor Paulichke" (presumably, Philippe Paulitschke), he has come to the conclusion that "L" is a town and a district located "on the right bank of the river Mareb in the province of Hamasen." The "Loggo" supplied by Paulitschke, and also by an Italian map of 1899 (which I have not seen), and the "Logo" of Salt (to be discussed presently), somehow, in the course of Anuchin's comments and deductions, evolve first a caudal *t* and then a caudal *n*, which none of *my* "L's" do; for at this point I abandoned Anuchin and launched upon some research of my own.

CHARLES PONCET (TRAVELLING IN 1698–1700) divides the empire of Ethiopia into several kingdoms (provinces), such as the Tigré. He divides the Tigré (ruled by Viceroy "Gaurekos") into twenty-four principalities (districts), of which he names only a few, such as the "Saravi" (Serawe), a plateau 6,000 feet high.

Henry Salt, a century later, divides the Tigré proper ("commonly called the Kingdom of the Baharnegash") into less than half of Poncet's number of districts, among which he names the Hamazen in the north, the Serawe south of it, and, still further south, the tiny district of Logo. At some later date, when the Hamazen and the Serawe became provinces, the latter, in its spread or shift southwards to the Mareb River, engulfed the Logo district and other small districts.

The Mareb is easily located, and its name hardly varies in travellers' accounts, of which there are so few prior to the 19th century. An examination of the splendid reproductions of the old maps in the splendid work of Albert Kammerer (1952) shows that this is the Mareb of Jacopo d'Angiolo (alias Agnolo della Scarperia), Rome MS, c. 1450; of Melchisedec Thevenot (after Balthazar Tellez), 1663; of Job Ludolf, 1683; of Bourguignon d'Anville, 1727; of Bruce, 1790 (drawn 1772); it is the Marib of Fra Mauro, 1460; the Marabo of Jacopo Gastaldi, 1561; the Marabus of Livio Sanuto, 1578; the Marab of Father Manoel de Almeida, 1645 (sketched c. 1630). It is also the Moraba of Poncet's account (1704).

Anuchin's informer, or more probably Anuchin himself, has confused two separate places: Logo and Logote. Saint-Yves, travelling, I suppose, sometime in the latter part of the 19th century, had seen from a mesa (Tokule Mt.) the town of "Logot" in the valley of the Mareb. In Salt's time (1810), Logo and Logote (or Legote) were separate townlets in two adjacent districts, the northern Logo and the southern Legote, the latter bounded south by the Munnai stretch of Mareb River. According to the only other author who mentions Logote (T. Lefebvre, 1846, III, 21, 28; whom, no doubt, Anuchin's French informer had read), the district of

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* *I.e.*, the characters universally accepted in geographic nomenclature. This has nothing to do with individual mistakes or transliterative predilections (Latin, Spanish, Italian, German, English, French, etc.) within the range of this alphabet, or the tendency on the part of experts in this or that transliterated language to break into a rash of diacritical signs. This writer fervently hopes that the Cyrillic alphabet, together with the even more absurd characters of Asiatic languages, will be completely scrapped some near day.

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Logote (Salt's Legote) is separated from the districts of "Tserana" and "Tokoulé" by the Belessa River (which is the Mai Belessan of Salt), a tributary of the Mareb. Lefebvre describes the Belessa as following the example of the Mareb by disappearing under the sands during the dry season, when, however, a little digging provides one with plenty of water. "Cette vallée de Logote étant très malsaine et remplie d'animaux carnassiers [lions, panthers], tous les villages sont situés sur la chaîne," and the villagers, having to come from those arid heights for water into the valley, are "très avares de leurs provisions."

The Mareb, which in its central course may be roughly said to separate northern Abyssinia from the rest of the country, is at various seasons and at various points of its meandering progress a raging torrent, an underground stream, or a dribble losing itself among the sands. Its various stretches bear, or have borne, local names. Its headwaters arise in the northeast, within fifty miles of Annesley Bay on the Red Sea; it is a tiny rivulet with a narrow bed below Debarwa; then it swells, sweeps south, turns west, and, collecting numerous other streams from the northern mountains, flows west toward the Sudan frontier, to disappear in the soil near Kassala, though in very wet weather an ultimate trickle reaches Atbara. Among these little northern tributaries we find the Seremai, the Belessa, and the Obel. The last appears on Bent's map (1893) and on the U.S. Army map (1943); the Seremai River, which is apparently just east of the Obel, is mentioned by Salt (1814), who, on his way inland from the Red Sea and the town of Dixan, which he left Mar. 5, 1810, arrived the following day at the picturesque village of Abha (p. 245):

> March 7th.—We struck our tents at five in the morning, and after proceeding about a mile southward, brought the hill of Cashaat to bear due east of us, at which point . . . we turned off a little to the west, and travelled about eight miles . . . until we reached an agreeable station, by the side of a river called Seremai. This river shapes its course through the bottom of a small secluded valley, surrounded on every side by steep and rugged hills, in a nook of which, about a mile to the eastward, lay a large town called Logo, whence the surrounding district takes its name.

Logo at that time (1810) was commanded by a rebellious chieftain "who in the campaign of the preceding year had been reduced to obedience by the Ras," and who made an attempt to stop and rob Salt's caravan. For all we know, he may have been Pushkin's fourth cousin.

From Logo the Salt party travelled south-south-west: "Our road now lay . . . through a wild and uncultivated country; we crossed the stream called Mai Belessan . . . and, after mounting a steep ascent, reached the village of Legóte. . . . The distance we had travelled from our last station [on the Seremai River, one mile west from the village of Logo] may be computed at about eight miles." Salt then crossed the Mareb and proceeded southward toward the "completely scarped" mountain (Debra Damo), "which in the earliest periods of the Abyssinian history, served as a place of confinement for the younger branches of the royal family" (p. 248), at which point Salt recalls Dr. Johnson's "beautiful and instructive romance." This is a reference to Samuel Johnson's insipid tale, *The Prince of Abissinia* or (in later editions) *The History of Rasselas, Prince of Abissinia*,* which appeared anonymously in two volumes in the spring of 1759—at a time readers managed to find poetry and talent in the journalism of Voltaire's flat *Contes*. Earlier (1735) Johnson had translated for a few shillings Joachim Le Grand's *Voyage historique d'Abissinie, du R.P. Jérôme Lobo*. It is pleasing to reflect that Salt may have seen on the very same day the birthplace of Pushkin's ancestor and the scene of Johnson's story.

The only maps on which I have been able to locate Logo are: the one in Salt's work and a smaller one (obviously copied from Salt, without acknowledgment) illustrating the 1830–32 journal kept by Samuel Gobat (a Swiss clergyman born in 1799). It lies about forty-five miles north-north-west of Aksum and about fifty miles south of Debarwa. I doubt if it exists to-day; perhaps it has wandered to some other site, as Abyssinian villages have been known to do. On none of the numerous maps made prior to the 18th century have I found any locus suggestive of "Logo," or "Lagon," or "Lagona," except obvious Italian or Spanish descriptive terms for "lake," "canal," "hot spring," or "pool" (*lagone*).

The trouble is that at exactly the necessary period, between the last visits of Jesuit priests in the 1630s and James Bruce's travels in the 1770s, no vocal European except Poncet (1698–1700) journeyed to northern Abyssinia.

* *Rasselas* was represented in Pushkin's library (Ballantyne's Novelist Library, vol. V, London, 1823, which also contains Sterne's *Sentimental Journey* and Goldsmith's *The Vicar of Wakefield*), but Pushkin had not enough English to read it. If he knew Johnson's tale at all, as he probably did, it was in a French translation, of which there were several. A Russian translation was published in Moscow, 1795, but a Russian gentleman would ignore the wretched Russian adaptations of the time and prefer the more fluid, though hardly more exact, French versions.

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I have discovered, however, another candidate for Gannibal's birthplace. Salt, in his earlier journal (1811), mentions the village of "Lahaina,"* which he saw on his way northward from "Antalow" (Antalo), the capital of Tigré-Endorta, to "Muccullah" (Macalle), in the same province. This Lahaina is, or was, about six miles from Antalo, in a direction nearly NNE, and thus about a hundred miles SSE of Logo. I cannot locate it on any map, but judging by Salt's account (he had just passed by "a picturesque village called Haraqué," which I identify with Gargara of the U.S. Army map, 1943), I should place Lahaina midway between 39° and 40° E and midway between 13° and 14° N. Beyond "Haraqué," after proceeding from one hill to another, Salt saw

> on a rising ground to our right [to the east] a village of considerable extent called Lahaina, from which place the road, turning a little more to the west, led through a more cultivated country, thickly set with acacia and brushwood. . . .

There is no reason why this Lahaina, rather than Logo or Logote, should not have been the Lagona or Lahona of Gannibal's petition, and there may have existed other similarly sounding place-names (on a "Laham" basis, for instance). I would consider, therefore, the determination of "L" as not settled at this time of writing; but I am inclined to assume that it was situated in the general region of Northern Abyssinia, where we have been following, through the bibliographic dust, the mules and camels of several adventurous caravans.

Gannibal's Sister

AFTER the passage concerning the scheming senior wives, who managed to have the youngest one's son turned over to the Turks, the German biography continues thus:

> His only full sister, Lahann, who was some years older than he, had yet sufficient courage to oppose this act of violence. She tried everything, but had to yield to number; she accompanied him to the very deck of the small ship, still nursing the hope that she might obtain by entreaties the freedom of this much beloved brother or purchase it with her jewels; but when she found that her tender efforts remained fruitless to the last, she cast herself in despair into the sea and was drowned. To the very end of his days, the venerable old man [Abram] would shed tears of the tenderest friendship and love as he recollected her; for although he was still very young at the time of that tragic event, yet whenever he thought of her this vague memory would become new and complete for him; and this offering [Abram's tears] was the better deserved by her sisterly tenderness since she had struggled so hard to free him, and since these two were the only siblings from the same mother.

Pushkin, in his note to the 1825 edition of *Eugene Onegin* obviously improves upon the German biography when he says "[Abram] also remembered his beloved [or "favourite"] sister, *Lagan'*, swimming in the distance after the ship in which he was receding."

As I have already mentioned, Pushkin carelessly follows here the Russian tradition of rendering the Latin *H* by the Russian gamma (so that, for instance, Henry becomes *Genri* and Heine masquerades as *Geyne*). Moreover, he attempts to feminise the ending of the name, which terminates in a consonant (an impossible ending for a feminine name in Russian), by closing it with a "soft sign" (an apostrophe in transliteration).

The receding ship, in whose wake swam—somewhat ahead of the romantic era—a passionate sister, might be easily condemned to dwindle to a reed raft on a seasonable river; indeed, the entire event might be dismissed by the cynic as one of those fairy-tale recollections that old age confuses with true happenings; but there is one reason it should command attention: the name "Lahann" is, I find, a plausible Abyssinian name.†

Generally speaking, names in *L*, and particularly in *La*, occur comparatively seldom in Abyssinian chronicles. According to Amhartic dictionaries, there is a man's name "Layahan"; and in the reign of King Bahafa (1719–28) there was a general named Lahen, who died about 1728 when governor of Hamasen.

We do not know how old was Ras Fares, governor of Tigré, in the 1690s, nor do we know the number of his wives or concubines. But we do know that Fares must have been an elderly man at the time, and we also know from the chronicles (Basset, XVIII, 310) that a young wife of his, who died at the latest in 1697, bore the name of Lahia Dengel or Lahya Dengel (meaning in Tigré "beauty of the Virgin"),

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* Or is this a mis-spelling for "Lahama" or "Lehama," a small district in Endorta mentioned by Lefebvre? There is, of course, another "Lahaina" in the world, namely, the former residence of the kings in the Hawaiian Islands.

† In Turkish, a language that Gannibal must have been able to understand at one time, *lahana* means "cabbage" and *lahin* "note," "tone," "melody." In Arabic, *lahan* means "melody" "modulation," "mispronunciation," and *layan* means "softness," "gentleness," *Zärtlichkeit*. In several Oriental languages, the stem *lah*= is associated with "loose woman' (cf. the Russian *lahanka*, a slattern, Pskovan dial., and *lahudra*, an inferior whore).

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which has a striking resemblance to that of the girl who may have been her daughter.

Gannibal's Parentage

TO UNDERSTAND the various improbabilities and absurdities in the German biography, the history of Abyssinia should be briefly recalled.

The Gospel was introduced there about A.D. 327 by Frumentius (c. 290–c. 350), a native of Phoenicia, who was consecrated bishop of Aksum by Athanasius of Alexandria. An awareness of that primitive empire, so near to Arabia, so far from Rome, was slow in reaching western Europe. The first reliable information was the fortunate outcome of ill-fated ventures on the part of heroic Jesuit missionaries who affronted the nameless dangers of a fabulous land for the holy joys of distributing images of their fair idols and of secretly rebaptising native children under the pious disguise of medical care. Some of these brave men were successful as martyrs, others as map-makers. In the 16th century, Portuguese troops helped the Abyssinians to break a relatively brief spell of Moslem domination that began about 1528 and lasted till the middle of the century. At one time, c. 1620, under King Susneyos, Abyssinia was actually converted by Portuguese Jesuits into a grotesque form of Catholicism, which petered out about 1630, in the beginning of the reign of Fasilidas, who restored the old religion and had the churches occupied again by the Monophysite clergy. In modern times, Russians have been pleasantly surprised at finding a kind of natural Greek-Orthodox tang to certain old eremetic practices still persisting in Ethiopia; and Protestant missionaries have been suspected by the natives of paganism because of their indifference to pictures of female saints and winged boys.

In the period that alone interests us—the last years of the 17th century and the first ones of the 18th—most Abyssinians were Christians; *i.e.*, members of the Abyssinian Church, a dreary, Coptic-flavoured brew of the most absurd ideas of old Christian and Jewish priests, all this spiced with barbarous local abominations. Despite the memory of cruel invasions, the state tolerated, for commercial reasons, Moslems and, for sporting ones, heathen Negro tribes, such as the Shangalla group, to which belonged the black savages inhabiting at the time a region not far from, or including, Logo, at a point "where the river Mareb, leaving Dobarwa, flows through thick bushes" (Bruce, 1790). In the late 17th century, and afterward, these heathens were enthusiastically hunted by Abyssinian kings in periodical safaris, and there is nothing impossible in a hypothesis that Pushkin's ancestor was captured in the process and sold to the Turks.

By 1700, little trace remained of the Moslem invasion that had been led by Ahmed ibn Ibrahim el Ghazi, surnamed Gran (Lefty), possibly a Somali, more than a century and a half before. Indeed, by the time of John I (c. 1667–81), the Moslems, although holding the east-coast islands, had no political power inland and were compelled to live in separate quarters in Abyssinian towns. It is conceivable that Gannibal's father was a pagan warrior or a well-to-do Moslem trader, and it is likewise conceivable that he was a local chief of princely blood, ruling over a district or a province, but it is impossible for one to imagine that about 1700, some 150 miles north of Gondar, the proud capital of Abyssinia, and less than 50 miles north from her sacred city Aksum, an Abyssinian nobleman governing three towns would be a subject of the Turkish sultan and thus a vassal of the Ottoman Empire!

We shall now suppose that (1) Gannibal's father was indeed a regional governor in northern Abyssinia and that (2) Gannibal's recollection of "taxes" and "tributes" corresponded in a twisted and nebulous way to certain historical realities.

Gannibal was born in a town beginning with L, in the Tigré proper or the Tigré-Endorta, about 1693, in the reign of Jesus the Great (Jyasu I), who succeeded his father John in 1680 (according to Basset), and was assassinated in result of the machinations of Queen Melakotawit (Fr. transliteration), who wanted her son, Tekla-Haymonot, to reign. Poncet, when spending the summer of 1700 in Debarwa, then the capital of Tigré, feasted there with two regional governors: one of them was apparently the governor of the whole Tigré province (*bahrnegas* or *bahr-negus*, a title that originally meant "lord of the sea," but that by the beginning of the preceding century had lost much of its importance); the other chief was either a temporary co-ruler or a district governor.

The chronicle published by Basset mentions only one governor of Tigré about 1700, namely Ras Fares (*ras* or *raz* meaning "head" in the Geez language). He became governor in the eleventh year of the reign of Jesus I and was still governor in the twenty-second year of that reign. In the first years of the 18th century he seems to have been assigned to other, presumably military, duties, although exercising his governorship off and on; and perhaps the other fellow, George, ruled in the intervals—and was being broken in at the time Poncet found the *bahrnegas* twinned. Ras Fares survived the two-year-long reign of Tekla-Haymonot I and was exiled to the isle of Mesrah by the next emperor,

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Theophilus (Tewoflos), who reigned for three years (c. 1708–11). At this point I lose track of Fares, who presumably died in exile.

Jesus I (1682–1706) was a not-untalented despot, and a mighty hunter, inordinately fond of chasing the buffalo and the Galla. He also kept a sharp eye on his provincial and district administrators. In the seventeenth year of his reign—that is, in the late 1690s (when Gannibal was five or six years of age)—the exactions of the officials and their robbery of the nation in collecting taxes became so outrageous that the emperor summoned all the notables from Endorta and other districts and demanded an explanation of them. The principal article of merchandise was rock salt. The officials, in the name of customs dues, used to confiscate most of the salt that the merchants brought on their asses into the town. The emperor decided that the tax on salt should be uniform throughout the country. The tax on five mules laden with salt was to be one slab.

The scandal coincided with Poncet's arrival in Abyssinia, and it is possible to believe that Ras Fares and various district governors in the province of Tigré (including Endorta) were involved. In these cases the emperor would no doubt feel even freer than usual to exact tribute from the governors—and probably would think nothing of ordering them to send their children as samples of Abyssinian nobility to the court of a Frankish king.

Gannibal's Enslavement

In the Abyssinia of those days everybody seems to have been selling everybody else into slavery. There is a charming story about an Abyssinian priest who is sent young divinity students by a friend, another priest, sells these youths one by one to a Moslem trader, then sells him his friend the priest, and then gets sold himself. In his *Travels* (1790), Bruce mentions Dixan, the first frontier town he reached in Abyssinia from the coastal island of Masuah (Massawa), on the Red Sea.

> Dixan is built on the top of a hill, perfectly in form of a sugar loaf, and consists of Moslems and Christians; the only trade of either of these sects is a very extraordinary one, that of selling children. The Christians bring such as they have stolen in Abyssinia to Dixan as to a sure deposit; and the Moors receive them there, and carry them to a certain market at Masuah, whence they are sent over to Arabia and India.

About 1700, according to Poncet, the price for a robust male slave was only ten *écus* (fifty shillings). In 1880, according to Enid Starkie, the average price of a small boy was twenty strips of copper cut from a kettle. Some eight years later, in the days of "trader Rainbow" (as the English called the French ex-poet Rimbaud), Christian Abyssinian boys cost eighty Levant dollars (about 150 shillings) per head. One suspects that most of the little Africans shipped to Arabia and Turkey were used there as catamites before reaching the age of toil.

I do not know how probable it may have been for the child of a seigneur, a province governor, or district governor to be directly or indirectly sold into slavery; but there is definite information (for instance, in Poncet) that in 1700 Emperor Jesus could and did command the noblemen—*i.e.*, various relatives of his, as all nobles were—to dispatch their children to a distant European court, with the result that these unfortunate Abyssinian youngsters were captured en route by the Turks.

Poncet, a French pharmacist in Cairo, who was invited to Abyssinia to treat Jesus I for conjunctivitis, left Cairo June 10, 1698, and, via the Nile and Dongola, reached Gondar July 21, 1699. The emperor proclaimed a young Armenian merchant (named "Murat" or, more exactly, Murad ben Magdelun, said to be the nephew of one of the emperor's ministers) ambassador to France: he was to accompany Poncet to Paris with gifts for King Louis XIV, such as elephants, horses, and *jeunes enfans Éthiopiens*, scions of noble families.

On his return voyage to Cairo (now via the Red Sea), Poncet left Gondar May 2, 1700, for Massawa, planning to stop on the way in the capital of Tigré, Debarwa, which he reached in mid-July, and to wait there for Murad, who was still collecting the animals and the children. But there were further delays; several horses and the only elephant, a young tuskless beast, died while crossing the Serawe Mts., and on Sept. 8, 1700, after waiting for Murad for almost two months, Poncet left Debarwa for the coast. Nine days later he reached the island of Massawa, embarked for Jidda on Sept. 28, and arrived there on Dec. 5. Murad being still delayed, the next meeting place was fixed at the head of the Red Sea in Suez, for which Poncet set out Jan. 12, 1701. At the end of April he reached the Mt. Sinai Monastery, where a month later Murad finally caught up with him, bringing a sad report: in Jidda, "le Roy de la Mecque" (the Grand Sherif Saad?) took away from him the highborn Ethiopian children that Murad had collected for the king of France—and it is not inconceivable that some of these the governor of Mecca (or that of Jidda) forwarded to the sultan of the Ottoman Empire, Mustafa II, as his own little tribute. All Murad now had were two young attendants obtained on the way at Suakin, "the bigger one an Ethiopian, the smaller a [Negro?] slave." Poncet's and Murad's caravan reached Cairo in

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the first week of June, and Poncet presented himself there before the French consul, Maillet.

In Cairo Poncet, now impatient to leave for France, got into trouble with Maillet, who questioned Murad's ambassadorial status, and with the Turks, who questioned the religion of the two slave boys (Murad's acquisition?) whom Poncet was taking with him. Says Le Grand: "L'Aga et les gens de la Douane [vinrent] l'avertir [June 26, 1701] que ses deux domestiques Abissins étant Mahométans devoient être rachetés... [Poncet] répondit que si ces enfans étaient Mahométans" he would make a gift of them to the Turkish governor of Egypt. But the local Jesuit superior, "touché de zèle pour le salut de ces deux enfans," intervened, and Poncet was not bothered any more. Whether he got the two youngsters out of Cairo, we do not know. It is also not clear if we should count as one of these boys or count separately as a third item, or consider as representing both, a "jeune esclave Éthiopien" whom Murad had brought to the French consul at Cairo, to be shipped to France together with the remains—ears and trunk—of the young elephant. This *petit esclave*, when already placed on the Nile barge that was to take him to the ship, began to cry that he was a Moslem, that he was being kidnapped, that he did not want to go to Christendom, which provoked a tumult, in consequence of which the Turkish officials removed the boy from the barge and placed him in the keep of one Mustafa Kiaya Kazdugli, after which Poncet sailed for France. Incidentally, the episode is curiously distorted in its re-telling by Bruce, who says that Poncet, when embarking at Bulaq, on the Nile, for his voyage to France, "watched helplessly as a bought slave, a poor Abyssinian lad, whom he was bringing for Louis the Fourteenth... was being taken out of ship by the Janizaries... and made a Mahometan before his eyes"—which implies, if I correctly understand what Bruce means, that the boy was an uncircumcised heathen Negro, and not a Christian Ethiopian, who would have been circumcised anyway (on the eighth day after his birth).

Gannibal in Turkey

AFTER DESCRIBING Lahann's death at the time of her brother's departure from Abyssinia or some neighbouring seaport, the German biography continues:

> Not long after this separation forever, Hannibal arrived in Constantinople and with the other young hostages was confined in the seraglio, to be raised there among the noble pages of the sultan, and there he spent one year and some months.

Let us pause here for a moment in order to check the chronological situation. We shall see presently that the Russian envoy could have obtained the young *arap* only between the autumn of 1702 and the summer of 1705 and that the most probable year is 1703. Working backward, we arrive at the following conclusion:

The journey from his home in inner Abyssinia—which, according to the German biography, Gannibal was forced to leave at seven years of age—to Turkey must have taken considerably longer than the meaningless gap-filler "nicht lange nach" implies—even if we choose for him the shortest itinerary of the time, from the Tigré province to north-western Turkey. There was an initial trek to a Red Sea port, then the tricky passage up the Red Sea to Suez, then another land journey to a Mediterranean port, and finally the long, awesome, and nauseous voyage to Stambul. Taking into account the difficulties of navigation and many delays, we must reckon the whole journey to have lasted at least one year—probably longer, especially if we take into consideration that Gannibal might have been conveyed to Turkey not by sea but by the caravan road via Arabia and Syria. In other words, he must have left home in 1700 if, by 1703, he had been living in Constantinople since the end of 1701.

We now have to choose between two possibilities: (1) that the boy landed in the Constantinople slave market in the ordinary course of the trade or (2) that, as the German biography avers, he was smuggled out of the sultan's seraglio and delivered to the Russian envoy, with the help of a grand vizier.

If we consider the first proposition, all we can say is either that the Russian envoy's agent may have induced his employer to show more gratitude by persuading him that the young slave had really been a highborn prisoner in the palace or, more likely, that the Russian envoy, having purchased the boy by ordinary means, cooked up the exotic version to impress the tsar. Since, however, we are inclined to accept the story of Gannibal's noble origin, for want of a better hypothesis, we may as well see what historical background there is to support the contention of the German biography, which, after the sentence referring to the length of time spent by Gannibal in Constantinople, launches upon the account of his deliverance with the following idiotic argument:

> At that time the Emperor Peter I was introducing the arts and the sciences in his realm and endeavouring to spread them among [his] noblemen. He did succeed to some extent in this undertaking; yet considering the great multitude of nobles in that most extensive of the world's empires, the number of people who showed in-

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> clination toward learning proved much too insignificant, a state of affairs that caused the late emperor most grievous and vexing pain. He cast around for means to extract from among the nation . . . examples and models. Finally, he conceived the idea of writing to his ambassador in Constantinople, requesting him to obtain for him and send him some young black boys of good abilities. His minister followed his orders with the utmost fidelity: he got acquainted with the supervisor of the seraglio where the sultan's pages were being reared and educated, and then, through the intermediation of the grand vizier obtained, in a secret and dangerous manner, three lads. . . .

One of these was Gannibal.

Pyotr Tolstoy is described by historians as a crafty, unscrupulous, and sinister character. In 1717, he was sent by the tsar to retrieve Prince Alexis, the heir to the throne, who had taken advantage of his ferocious sire's journey abroad to escape from Russia to Austria and Italy, and whom the tsar's agents tracked down and brought back, in a series of quiet moves marked by the kind of hypnotic tenacity, persuasion, and deceit that we associate to-day with the forced repatriation of fugitives by Soviet thugs. The man who could lure Alexis from the security of Naples to his terrible fatherland, to be tortured to death there under Peter's supervision, might easily have devised a means to obtain a poor little blackamoor for his master's amusement.

My opinion that the tsar's envoy to the Ottoman Porte obtained Gannibal, by the tsar's order and for the tsar's service, not earlier than 1703 and not later than 1704 is corroborated by Gannibal himself in the following two documents:

(1) In a letter from Paris to Councillor Makarov, dated Mar. 5, 1721 (probably, N.S.), Gannibal mentions that he has served the tsar for seventeen years.

(2) In an address to Empress Catherine I, in 1726 (when presenting her a textbook on military engineering that he had compiled on the basis of his La Fère or Metz notes), he mentions that he has lived for twenty-two years *pri dome* (at the domicile, in the entourage, in the household) of the late tsar (who died in 1725).

Gannibal and Raguzinski

"In the meantime," the German biography continues, using its favourite formula:

> the father of the late general [of Abram Gannibal], who had been ripe in years and almost senile at the time of Abram's departure, died, and the succession of his rule fell to the lot of one of Abram's stepbrothers. . . . The Russian envoy, who was glad to observe the will of his emperor, sent to Moscow [the three lads]: Ibrahim Hannibal; another black boy—a compatriot of his of noble birth—who, however, died of smallpox on the way; and a Ragusan of nearly the same age, *i.e.*, under ten. Although deploring the loss of one of the boys, the emperor was delighted that the two others arrived safely, and took over personally the care of bringing them up; the more eagerly because, as already said, he wished to make examples of them . . . and put [Russians] to shame by convincing them that out of every people, and even from among wild men—such as Negroes, whom our civilised nations assign exclusively to the class of slaves—there can be formed men who by dint of application can obtain knowledge and learning [and thus] become helpful and useful to their monarch. . . . A no mean connoisseur of mankind, the emperor investigated in advance the inclinations of his newly arrived objects. He destined Hannibal, who was a quick, keen, and fiery young fellow, for a military career, and he destined the Ragusan (later known in Russia as Count Raguzinski), who was of a quieter and more meditative nature, for the civil service.

Under Mustafa II and Ahmed III, Turkey exacted a tribute from Ragusa (*e.g.*, the sum of 4,000 ducats in 1703) as well as from Arab tribes; but the law for collecting Christian tribute boys, although nominally in existence until 1750, had not been enforced since the middle of the preceding century. There is no reason to believe that Sava Vladislavich had been dispatched to Constantinople in the natural course of personal adventure and paternal trade; but the fact of there having been Ragusan tribute boys in the past may have somehow influenced the account of Gannibal's boyhood.

On Sept. 25, 1702, a month after his arrival in Turkey, Pyotr Tolstoy wrote to Count Fyodor Golovin, Minister of Foreign Affairs:

> A Ragusan dwelling in Constantinople, Sava Vladislavov, who as you know is a good man, has now, by my advice, set out with wares for Azov and from there will proceed to Moscow. [He] is here an infinitely useful person to His Muscovite Majesty.

Sometime in the autumn of that year Vladislavich arrived in Azov with an ostensible cargo of olive oil, cotton, and calico, and eventually (by the first week of April, 1703) reached Moscow, where in result of the great secret reports he brought he was made much of by Peter I.

Bringing sables and ermines, Russian fox (white-collar and red) and wolf (Muscovite and Azovan), he returned to Constantinople in 1704 or early 1705, and then in the summer of 1705 set out again for Azov and Moscow, carrying

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more calico and more secret dispatches from Pyotr Tolstoy as well as a live present for the tsar.

It is evident that Gannibal was obtained sometime between the dates of Vladislavich's two departures from Constantinople. To judge by a letter from the tsar to the Constantinople ambassador's brother, Ivan Tolstoy, commander of Azov, Vladislavich was in Moscow with the reports, and presumably with the little blackamoor, not later than Jan. 12, 1706 (the exact date of his arrival might be easily settled by consulting unpublished papers in the local archives). Vladislavich travelled in 1716–22 on diplomatic missions to Venice and Ragusa and in 1725–28 was envoy to China.

Gannibal's First Years in Russia

AT THE TIME of Gannibal's arrival in Russia, Peter was in the midst of the Swedish campaign, with the battlefield—a fluctuating and somewhat phantomic affair—in Poland. In Moscow he amused himself with establishing an anatomical and biological museum, with a botanical garden in front of it. The young blackamoor was no doubt welcomed as an additional curio. Peter visited Kiev in July–August 1706, and, travelling north again, was just in time to enjoy watching, on Sept. 11, 1706, the first inundation in "Piterburh" (or "Paradis," as he fondly called the town he had just founded). Especially entertaining was the sight of men and women huddling on the roofs of submerged shacks.

Peter was again in Vilno (on his way back from Warsaw to Petersburg) by Sept. 24, 1707, and stayed there till Oct. 10. It is within these time-limits that the, at least, fourteen-year-old Abyssinian was baptised and given the name of Pyotr. More or less synchronously (Sept. 27, 1707), his royal sponsor jotted down a little memorandum dealing with the naming of the progeny of Lenita or Lenta (from the Latin *lenis*, "gentle," or *lentus*, "tenacious," "slow"), an English mastiff: two years before, in the monastery of Polotsk, the tsar had had this hound maul Theophanus, an outspoken Uniate monk of the St. Basil Order, whom he had then hacked in two with his sword. The pseudo-classical names for her seven pups, which the tsar translated no doubt from some current nomenclator, read—as translated back from Peter's uncouth Russian—Pirrhous (reddish), Eous (dawn), Aethon (bright), Phlegethon (blazing), Pallas, Nymph, and Venus. The eventual surname Annibal given to the blackamoor may also have been thought up by the enlightened monarch, although there are other possibilities. The fate of the young mastiffs can be traced to another note, a fortnight later, in which the tsar commands Lenita's pups to be taught by some foreign-born fancier on his staff to perform various tricks, such as doffing a cap, shouldering a toy musket, and marching under arms into water.

At the time, according to western European observers, reiteration of baptism, and baptism anew, of youths and adults, was performed at Peter's court by pouring cold water three times over the whole body from head to foot. If Gannibal had been born an Abyssinian princeling, he would have been baptised at birth, since Abyssinia had been Christianised six centuries before Russia; but it is quite probable that upon capture the Turks had him Moslemised (*pobasurmanili*, in the Russian of the time), whatever that process implies. The question, however, is completely futile because, first, any African was to Russians a heathen and, second, the ceremony performed on the young blackamoor, at the Pyatnitski church, in late September or early October, 1707 (not "1705," as the memorial plaque there oddly says), with Peter I as godfather and Christiana Eberhardina, wife of King Augustus II of Poland, as godmother, was conducted in the rowdy and slapstick atmosphere of Peter's court and smacks of mock marriages between freaks or the elevation of jesters to the rank of governors of Barataria. Indeed, there seems to have been an attempt by some zealous courtiers, a few months before, to marry the blackamoor: in a letter from Poland, dated May 13, 1707, the tsar writes to Councilor Avtonom Ivanov that he does not wish to have the *arap* conjugated—with, presumably, the daughter of some grandee's Negro servant, or a dwarf, or a Russian female house fool. This was a critical moment for the gene that participated in the making of Pushkin, and the tsar should be thanked for directing the course of chance.

LET US TURN to some of the anecdotes about young Gannibal.

The best-known story is one given in preposterous detail by the German biography, and repeated with personal variations by Golikov and Pushkin. The gist of it is that young Abram, upon becoming the tsar's valet or assistant valet, slept in an adjacent room and proved his intelligence by transcribing the drafts of decrees that his master would scribble at night on slates.

In a document dated Dec. 20, 1709 (quoted by M. Vegner, p. 23), a passage reads: "By [the tsar's] order, in view of the Christmas holidays, coats have been made for Joachim the dwarf and Abram the blackamoor, with camisoles and breeches. Moreover, eight arshins [six yards] of scarlet cloth . . . and brass buttons have been purhased for both." E. Shmurlo (1892) vaguely refers to some documents in which "Abram is

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mentioned three times, in the same breath, with the tsar's jester Lacosta." This is Yan Dekosta or, correctly, Jan d'Acosta, Peter's favourite court jester, a Christianised Jew born in Holland.* According to another anecdote, one day in the summer of about 1715, on board ship, just before a royal cruise from St. Petersburg to Revel, the tsar's physician, Lestocq, and a gentleman of the chamber, Jonson, two merry fellows, having found the tsar's Russian Jester Tyurikov fast asleep on the deck, played a period prank upon him: they took some tar and glued his long beard to his bare chest. Upon awakening the poor jester howled, at which the tsar, interrupted in his studies of navigation and keelhauling, came pounding along, bumped into the innocent Gannibal, and, in a rage, flogged him unmercifully with a length of rope. At dinner the two pranksters could not help chuckling at the sight of the Moor's glum face. When the good tsar, a humorist in his own right, learned the cause of their mirth, he burst out laughing too and told Abram that to mend matters he would ignore his next misdemeanour.

THIS IS ABOUT ALL I was able to gather in the way of published material pertaining to Gannibal's first ten years in Russia. We can dismiss as family fantasy a passage in the German biography that asserts that "the ruling half-brother" of Gannibal instructed a young brother to travel to Constantinople to ransom Abram; that, not finding him there, this brother travelled on to Petersburg, bringing as gifts "precious weapons and Arabic writs," which established Abram's princely origin; that the latter refused to go back to heathendom; and that the brother set out on his return journey "with tears on both sides." There is hardly any need to remark that no Abyssinian seigneur could have travelled to Muscovy via Turkey without being enslaved there, nor is there any historical information of any free Abyssinian undertaking such a journey in the first part of the 18th century.

It is likely that the tsar took his *arap* along on some of his travels or campaigns, but hardly on all his marches, as family tradition has it. We get a ghostly glimpse of a stylised young blackamoor in more or less Turkish garb lurking in the emblematic background—holding a battle horse or a bunch of grapes—in several portraits of Peter I. He is present in an engraving executed by Adriaan Schoonebeeck (d. 1705) from a lost picture painted about 1704; there he stands at the back, and to the anatomical right, of the tsar, who, for the nonce, sports a French king's dress. I am not sure there is not some error in the dating of the thing itself or of its engraver's death. But if we accept the date, and the possibility of the pictured blackamoor being Gannibal, we have to suppose that either he was brought by Raguzinski on the latter's first trip to Moscow (1703) or that he was portrayed—prospectively, as it were—on the strength of information received in Moscow from Constantinople: a blackamoor in attendance was a symbol of supreme luxury and grandeur, and the tsar must have awaited his 1706 New Year gift from his envoy with as much eagerness as he did shipments of lilies and lilacs.

Gannibal in Western Europe

IN JANUARY, 1716, Peter I set out on a European tour. After spending a month or so in Copenhagen, he pursued his journey to Holland and France. He landed in Dunkerque, and arrived in Paris where he forthwith asked for beer and bawds. Philippe, Duke of Orléans, was regent of France (1715–23) during the minority of Louis XV. The Muscovite tsar's six-week stay produced little more than a crop of dirty stories—though why the grandees of the Régence, a filthy pack in a disgusting and talentless age, should have been so puzzled by Peter's habits is not quite clear.

In the same spring of 1717, four young men arrived in France from Russia to study fortification and military mining. They may have come with the tsar, but more probably they voyaged separately from him and did not sojourn in Denmark. The four men: Abram Arap, Stepan Korovin, Gavrila Rezanov, and Aleksey Yurov, our hero's chum.

The German biography, with its usual overstatement, bad grammar, and inexactitude, says that Peter I sent Gannibal straight to the Regent, asking the latter "to assume supervision," and that Gannibal at first studied "under the great Belior [*sic*] at a military school for young noblemen." The reference is, I suggest, to Bernard Forest de Belidor (1639–1761), a brilliant young French engineer, who taught at the Ecole d'Artillerie of La Fère (in the Aisne, north-west of Laon) and wrote a *Sommaire d'un cours d'architecture militaire, civile et hydraulique* (1720) and other distinguished works.

According to the German biography, Ganni-

* He was a man of parts and a member of a well-known Marrano family (da Costa, or Mendez da Costa) that had fled from Portugal in the 17th century and settled in Italy, Holland, England, and other countries. Jan d'Acosta, who was a lawyer in Hamburg, sought a more colourful life and finding a patron in the Russian consul followed him to Muscovy. The tsar was delighted with his wit, made him a count, and gave him a barren island off the Finnish coast.

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bal then joined an artillery regiment in France and as a *capitaine* of a company participated in a war against Spain. This war was declared Jan. 9, 1719, and peace was signed Feb. 17, 1720. During an undermining operation—somewhere in Catalonia, I suppose—he was severely wounded in the head and taken prisoner (it is odd that he never mentions this event in his letters from France). Upon his return to France, Abram apparently went on with his studies at another school, the Ecole d'Artillerie of Metz, an institution founded by the illustrious military engineer Sébastien Le Prestre, Marquis de Vauban (1633–1707).

By January, 1722, the Russian ambassador, Prince V. L. Dolgorukov, had announced to the four young men that they would have to return to Russia, but a year of procrastination followed. It would seem that part of that year Abram and his companions spent in Paris—in the hectic Paris that had been left a financial shambles by John Law. Early spring was marked by fabulous balls and illuminations in honour of the arrival of a tentative bride for the king, the blonde little infanta, aged four and a half, whom, however, the twelve-year-old Louis did not like. The Regent was energetically pursuing his life of debauchery. Courtesans wore stockings of flesh-coloured silk. Thieves and highwaymen were subjected to the iron boot, the toasting of toes against an ordinary or extraordinary fire, and foot baths of boiling oil. The financial term "liquidated" (*liquidé*) was used in regard to executed criminals. The poet Arouet (better known as Voltaire) was thrashed by the footmen of an officer whom he had called a police spy. Prodigious sums were won and lost at faro. The Marquis de Saillant successfully wagered he would ride ninety miles on horseback in six hours.

In the midst of these dazzling frolics, little is known of Abram's existence, except that he was continuously and abjectly hard up. I can find nothing in the French memoirs of the Régence that would corroborate statements made by Pushkin in his novel that all the ladies desired to entertain *le nègre du Czar*, that he hobnobbed with Voltaire, and that the playwright Michel Guyot de Merville introduced him to a woman of fashion, "Countess Lénore de D.," who bore him a black baby. The letters Abram wrote in Russian from France to various officials (clamouring for money, pleading not to be sent home by sea, saying he would rather walk than sail, begging in vain to be left in France for further studies, and so forth) seem to me to have been worded not by him but by his companion in hyperbolic distress, Aleksey Yurov. After six or seven years abroad, Abram appears to have forgotten Russian so thoroughly that upon his return the autocrat bundled him off to grammar school at the Aleksandronevski Monastery, where he was enrolled on Mar. 14, 1723, O.S. He seems to have been returned to the imperial household on Nov. 27, 1724. Commentators have wondered if perhaps the event might refer to some other "Abram the blackamoor" (though no other is known), since it seemed to them to clash with the fact that on Feb. 4, 1724, by a *ukase* in the tsar's own hand Abram was made a lieutenant (*poruchik*) in the bombardier company of the Preobrazhenski regiment. However, the whole age was a freakish one.

Gannibal brought from France a small library (sixty-nine titles) consisting mainly of historical works, military manuals, travels, and a sprinkling of fashionable exotica; all these volumes he sold (in 1726) for two hundred roubles to the Imperial Library but bought them (or a similar set) back in 1742. Although the list is quite conventional, with works by Bossuet, Malebranche, Fontenelle, Corneille, and Racine representing its literary section, there is a distinct stress on various voyages, with Chardin taking the reader to Persia to discover that a milk diet cures ulcers; Lahontan visiting, in a kind of proto-Chateaubriandesque America (1688), the Gnacsitares and the Mozemleks, whom none saw after him; and Cyrano de Bergerac journeying to the moon, where people have names only expressible by little melodies of a few musical notes.

Gannibal and Annibal

OFFICIALLY, the name of Peter I's godchild had become Pyotr Petrovich Petrov (Christian name, patronymic, and surname), but he had grown used in Turkey to the name of Ibrahim and was allowed to call himself by its Russian counterpart, Avraam or Abram. Actually, he should not have boggled at bearing his godfather's name: after all, it had been a Petrus Aethiops (Pasfa Sayon Malbazo) who published in Rome, about 1549, after thirteen years of labour, the New Testament in the language of Abyssinian liturgy (that is, Geez, the ancient Ethiopic, which was later replaced by Amharic).

The statement in the beginning of the German biography to the effect that Abram's father, a proud Abyssinian seigneur, traced his lineage two thousand years back to Hannibal, the famous Carthaginian general, is of course nonsense: it is impossible to conceive that an Abyssinian of the 17th century should have known anything of him. The surname Gannibal was applied to Abram in official documents as early as 1723, upon his return from France. In other references, and in all earlier ones, he is

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called *Abram arap* or *Abram Petrov Arap*, where the middle term is the patronymic in the act of changing into a surname. It is interesting to mark how puzzled Russian commentators are by this choice of name, which in reality is such an obvious one. Anuchin, for example, absurdly suggests that Abram or Abram's family might have derived "Gannibal" from Adi Baro (a village just north of Debarwa, northern Abyssinia)! Why not from Lalibala (an Abyssinian emperor of the 13th century), or from Hamalmal (a provincial governor who rebelled against his royal cousin, Malak Sagad I, in the late 1500s), or, still better, from *gane bal*, which means "strange master" in Tigré; there are no holds barred in these linguistic *petits-jeux*.

Actually, of course, our hero's eponym was as trite and familiar a figure in the pseudo classically-minded Europe of the 18th century—in its textbooks, essays, historical works, newspaper articles, and academic speeches—as were Cæsar and Cicero. In Tsar Peter's Russia no illumination was complete without the names of Greek and Roman heroes appearing in a pyrotechnical display of old saws. Pushkin was quite right in Gallicising the adopted surname that Abram had most probably brought from France in 1723. There, and in Italy, it was not infrequently met with as a given name (*e.g.*, François Annibal, duc d'Estrées, d. 1687). He had certainly encountered it in his military studies. He had read about "le grand génie d'Annibal" in Bossuet's *Discours sur l'histoire universelle*. If he really took part in the Spanish War, he must have been stationed in 1719 at the fort of Bellegarde (re-built by Vauban in 1679) and have trodden there, on the Spanish border, near the village of Le Perthus (Pyrénées Orientales), the Elephant Steps of Hannibal's Highway, still visible to-day among the arbutus and oak brush. And one also wonders if in Metz he had not had for schoolmate a certain Pierre Robert *dit* Annibal (1669–1783), who must have been living there about 1720, according to the parish records published by Porier.

Gannibal's Later Years in Russia

LE CAPITAINE *Petrov dit Annibal*, having acquired in France some kowledge of bulwarks and buttresses, lived, from 1723 on, in Russia, teaching mathematics and building fortresses.

I have not performed any special research in regard to this final lap of his life; it is fairly well known in its main features, and as Russian commentators have pointed out, Pushkin's presentation of Abram's Siberian period is false. On May 8, 1727, immediately after the end of Catherine I's reign, he was dispatched to inspect a fort in Kazan and then to build one in Selenginsk, on the Chinese border—where, incidentally, Lieutenant Gannibal encountered his former patron, Count Vladislavich-Raguzinski, who was returning from his Chinese embassy. Vaguely accused of political intrigue, Gannibal found himself kept at work in Selenginsk and Tobolsk for a couple of years, and only in the beginning of Anna's reign the governor of St. Petersburg, Münnich, needing a good military engineer, had him transferred to a Baltic fort. In 1731, Gannibal married Evdokia (Eudoxia) Dioper, daughter of a sea captain, Andrey Dioper, presumably of Greek origin. She was unfaithful to him, and so was he to her. According to documents described by Stepan Opatovich (in *Russkaya starina*, 1877), Gannibal, in 1732, rigged up at his home a private torture chamber complete with pulleys, iron clamps, thumbkins, leathern whips, and so forth. An obstinate and formalistic man, he then managed to have his victim imprisoned by the state for marital betrayal. She stayed five years in jail, after which—while divorce proceedings were dragging on—she was more or less at liberty till 1753, when the final separation was accorded; upon which, the unfortunate woman was packed away to a remote convent, where she died. In the meantime, in 1736, Gannibal had married (unlawfully) his mistress of four years' standing, the daughter of another captain, an army captain this time, named Matthias Schöberg, Lutheran, of Swedish-German descent. By this second wife (whose first name was Christina Regine, according to the German biography) Gannibal had eleven children, of whom the third son, Osip, was to be Pushkin's maternal grandfather.

Gannibal spent a few years as a country squire on a piece of acquired land, and then went on building fortresses. In 1742, Elizabeth, Peter I's younger daughter, made him a major general and four years later granted him the country seat of Mihaylovskoe in the province of Pskov, which was to be forever linked up with Pushkin's name. During these years, Gannibal proved himself an expert at arranging fireworks at state festivals and composing denunciations of various officials. In 1762, after building his last fortress and propelling his last rocket, he was retired and lived in obscure senility for another twenty years on yet another country estate (Suida, near Petersburg), where he died in 1781, at the advanced age of (probably) eighty-eight.

Conclusions

BESIDES the unfinished romance (1827) *The Blackamoor of Peter the Great* (in which a greatly glamourised Ibrahim is given fictitious

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adventures in France and Russia—all this is not in the author's best vein), there is among Pushkin's works a remarkable piece in verse referring to the same character. In this postscriptum of five stanzas to a poem on his paternal lineage (*Moya rodoslovnaya*), in iambic tetrameter, Pushkin has this to say about his maternal ancestor (I have not rendered the rhymes, feminine and masculine, which alternate in the original):

Figlyarin, smug at home, decided
That my black grandsire, Gannibal,
Was for a bottle of rum acquired
And fell into a skipper's hands.

This skipper was the glorious skipper
Through whom our country was advanced,
Who to our native vessel's rudder
Gave mightily a sovereign course.

This skipper was accessible
To my grandsire; the blackamoor,
Bought cheaply, grew up staunch and loyal,
The emperor's bosom friend, not slave....

"Figlyarin" (from *figlyar*, a zany, a coarse buffoon) is a play on the name of a hated reviewer, Fadey (Thaddeus, Thady) Bulgarin. It was thought up by the minor poet Vyazemski, Pushkin's friend, and first used by another poet, Baratïnski, in a published epigram of 1827. Pushkin's piece was written in 1830, and it is his answer to the following vicious innuendo by Bulgarin in his magazine *Severnaya pchela* (The Northern Bee):

> Byron's lordship and aristocratic capers, combined with God knows what way of thinking, have driven to frenzy a multitude of poets and rhymesters in various countries: all of them have started talking about their six-hundred-year-old nobility! ... It is openly related that some poet or other in Spanish America, likewise an imitator of Byron, being of mulatto descent on his father's or (I do not quite remember) mother's side, began to affirm that one of his ancestors was a Negro prince. A search in the town hall's archives disclosed that in the past there had been a lawsuit between a skipper and his mate on account of that Negro, and that the skipper maintained he had acquired the Negro for a bottle of rum.

It would be a waste of time to conjecture that Abram was not born in Abyssinia at all; that he had been captured by slave traders in a totally different place—say, the Lagona region of equatorial Africa, south of Lake Chad, inhabited by Mussulman Negroes; or that he was, as Helbig (1809) affirms, a homeless little *Mohr* (Negro), acquired in Holland by Peter I to serve as a ship's boy (Bulgarin's source); we may also brood on the puzzling question why Gannibal, with his sense of the political, and Pushkin, with his sense of the exotic, never once allude to Abyssinia (Pushkin, of course, knew of its mention in the German biography, the Russian translation of which had been dictated to him). Nonetheless, it is upon non-believers in the Abyssinian theory that the burden of the proof rests; while, on the other hand, those who accept it must waver between seeing in Pushkin the great-great-grandson of one of those rude and free Negro nomads who haunted the Mareb region or a descendant of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba, from whom Abyssinian kings derived their dynasty.

According to N. Barsukov (1891), who had it from Elizaveta Pushkin, widow of our poet's brother Lev, the hands of Nadezhda Gannibal, Pushkin's mother, had yellowish palms; and according to another source, quoted by V. Vinogradov (1930), all the daughters of Isaak Gannibal, Pushkin's grand-uncle, son of Abram, spoke with a peculiar sing-song intonation—"an African accent," quaintly says an old-timer, who remarks that they "cooed like Egyptian pigeons."

There exists no authentic portrait of Abram Gannibal. A late 18th-century oil, which some suppose represents him, wearing a decoration he never received, is, anyway, hopelessly stylised by the dauber. Nor can one draw any conclusion from the portraits of his progeny as to what blood predominated in Abram, Negro or Caucasian. In Pushkin, admixtures of Slavic and German strains must have completely obscured whatever definite racial characteristics his ancestors may have possessed, while the fact that certain portraits of Pushkin by good artists, and his death mask, do bear a remarkable resemblance to modern photographs of typical Abyssinians, is exactly what one might expect in the descendant of a Negro married to a Caucasian. It should be repeated that "Abyssinian" implies a very complicated blend of the Hamitic and the Semitic and that, moreover, distinct Negroid types commingle with Caucasian ones on the northern plateau and among ruling families almost as much as they do among the nomadic heathens of the lowland brush. The Galla tribes (the Oromota), for example, who overran the country simultaneously with the Turkish invasion in the 16th century, are Hamites with a strong Negro strain. Abram may have had the characteristics that Bent found in the Tigré and Hamasen tribes: "skin ... of a rich chocolate colour, the hair curly, the nose straight with a tendency toward the aquiline, the lips thickish," or—while still technically an Abyssinian—he might have possessed the traits that Pushkin, a conventionalist in these matters, gives Ibrahim in his novel: "a black skin, a flat nose, inverted

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lips, and rough woolly hair." The taxonomic problem remains unsettled and will probably remain so despite "anthropological sketches" of the Anuchin brand. And although Abram Gannibal used to refer to himself, in humble letters to grandees, as "a poor Negro," and although Pushkin saw him as a Negro with "African passions" and an independent brilliant personality, actually Pyotr Petrovich Petrov, alias Abram Gannibal, was a sour, grovelling, crotchety, timid, ambitious, and cruel person; a good military engineer, perhaps, but humanistically a nonentity; differing in nothing from a typical career-minded, superficially educated, coarse, wife-flogging Russian of his day, in a brutal and dull world of political intrigue, favouritism, Germanic regimentation, old-fashioned Russian misery, and fat-breasted empresses on despicable thrones.

WE SHALL NOW GO BACK to a certain passage in Pushkin's note to *Eugene Onegin*: It reads:

> Up to an advanced age, Annibal still remembered Africa, the sumptuous life of his father, and nineteen brothers, of whom he was the youngest; he remembered how they used to be led into his father's presence with their hands bound behind their backs, whilst he alone remained free and went swimming under the fountains of the paternal home....

Had Pushkin explicitly stated here that the paternal home was in Abyssinia, we might have argued that he had borrowed from literary sources of his time this strikingly specific detail of an Ethiopian ruler's sons being treated as captives, potential parricides, possible usurpers. The banishment of young princes to bleak hill-tops in the Tigré province by kings and viceroys as a precaution against violent succession had had a great romanesque impact on the imagination of western Europe in the 18th century. And, most curiously, the Abyssinian chronicler Za-Ouald (French transcription) tells us that in the twenty-second year (1702, 1703, or 1704) of Jesus I's reign, he caused all his sons to be put in chains—and was assassinated a couple of years later by his only free son, Tekla. I do not think that Pushkin deliberately introduced here this local note—to corroborate a statement of locus he had never made and allude to a specific incident he could not have known. It seems more plausible to suppose that the governor of "L" dutifully followed his "sultan" in this colourful custom. In fact, I would say that this, and the sister's name Lahann, are the only details that have a true Abyssinian flavour.

The other detail, concerning the swimming under the fountains, *pod fontanami*, is less convincing, unless we take it to imply cascades, small waterfalls, etc., and not the playing sprays of an African Versailles, Abram's paternal home. Of that home we know even less than we do of a certain farm at Snitterfield, near Stratford. One thinks of the faucets in Johnson's watery *Rasselas* (of which Salt thought in Abyssinia) as well as of the *cent milles jets d'eau* of King Belus' marble palace on the Euphrates in Voltaire's unreadable novella *Voyages et Aventures d'une princesse babylonienne, pour servir de suite à ceux de Scarmentado, par un vieux philosophe qui ne radote pas toujours* (Geneva, 1768).

IF ONE LIKES to think that Dr. Johnson's contemporary, Pushkin's great-grandfather, was born practically in "Rasselas'" lap, at the foot of the joint memorial blending Ethiopian history and the didactic romance of the French 18th century, one may allow oneself also to visualise a Frenchman of Louis XIV's time feasting with Pushkin's dusky great-great-grandfather in the land of Prester John. Let me conclude these rapid notes about Gannibal with the following poetical excerpt from the anonymous English translation (1709) of the travels of Charles Poncet, who stayed in Debarwa in the summer of 1700:

> After a solemn service for the emperor's son [Fasilidas, heir to the throne], who had just died, the two Governors seated themselves in a great hall, and placed me in the middle between them. After that, the officers and persons of note, both men and women, rang'd themselves round the hall. Certain women with tabors... began to sing... in so doleful a tone that I could not hinder being seized with grief....

One's marginal imagination conjures up here many a pleasing possibility. We recall Coleridge's Abyssinian maid (*Kubla Khan*, 1797) singing of "Mount Abora," which (unless it merely echoes the name of the musical instrument) is, I suggest, either Mt. Tabor, an amba (natural citadel), some 3,000 feet high in the Siré district of the Tigré, or still more exactly the unlocated amba Abora, which I find mentioned by the chronicler Za-Ouald (in Basset's translation) as being the burial place of a certain high official named Gyorgis (one of Poncet's two governors?) in 1707. We may further imagine that Coleridge's and Poncet's doleful singer was none other than Pushkin's great-great-grandmother; that her lord, either of Poncet's two hosts, was Pushkin's great-great-grandfather; and that the latter was a son of Cella Christos, Dr. Johnson's Rasselas. There is nothing in the annals of Russian Pushkinology to restrain one from the elaboration of such fancies.

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Max Frisch

Andorra

From a New Play

Author's Preface

THE NAME: Naturally the play does not refer to the real small state of this name, to the little nation in the Pyrenees which I do not know, nor does it refer to another real small state which I do know; Andorra is the name of a model. There is another map of the world; on this map, and nowhere else, we find Shakespeare's Illyria, Dürrenmatt's Güllen, Brecht's Setzuan, Giraudoux's Troy, etc.

The story: It is invented, and in this instance I even remember when and where it occurred to me: in 1946 in the Café de la Terrasse, Zürich, in the morning. Written as a prose sketch, published in *Tagebuch 1946–1949*, entitled "The Andorran Jew."

There lived in Andorra a young man who was taken for a Jew. The task would be to tell the supposed story of his origin, his daily contacts with the Andorrans, who saw in him the Jew—the ready-made image that was waiting for him everywhere. For example, their distrust of his natural emotions which a Jew, as the Andorrans know, cannot have. He was thrown back on the acuteness of his intellect, which for that very reason became more acute, of necessity. Or his attitude to money, which plays a very important part in Andorra too. He knew, he felt what everyone thought without putting it into words; he examined himself to see if it was really true that he was always thinking about money, he examined himself till he discovered that it was so, that it was true, he really was always thinking about money. He confessed it; he made no secret of it, and the Andorrans looked at each other, without a word, the corners of their mouths scarcely twitched. Where the Fatherland was concerned, too, he knew exactly what they thought. Every time he took the word in his mouth they let it lie, like a coin that has fallen in the dirt. Because a Jew —the Andorrans knew this too—has fatherlands which he chooses, which he buys, but no fatherland like us, no fatherland to which he is born; and however well he meant it when the Fatherland was being discussed, he spoke into a silence as though into cotton wool.

Later he realised that he was obviously lacking in tact, indeed on one occasion they told him so to his face, when, disheartened by their behaviour, he became positively passionate. The Fatherland belonged to the others, once and for all, and he was not expected to be able to love it, on the contrary his continual wooing of the Fatherland merely opened up a chasm of suspicion; he was courting favour, advantage, approval, which they felt to be a means to an end, even if they themselves could discern no possible end. So it went on, until one day he discovered with his restless intelligence, which had to keep analysing everything, that he really didn't love the Fatherland, that he disliked the very word itself, which always led to embarrassment every time he used it. Obviously they were right. Obviously he couldn't love at all, not in the Andorran sense; he had the heat of passion,

THE *brilliant presentation of "Andorra" in Zürich's Schauspielhaus last winter marked the most conspicuous success in the career of the distinguished Swiss novelist and playwright. It is already playing to impressively, eerily silent German audiences in Munich and Berlin (in a production by Fritz Kortner); it has been broadcast by the B.B.C., and will shortly be published by Methuen in the translation by Michael Bullock.*

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certainly, and also the coldness of his intelligence, and they felt that this intelligence was an ever-ready secret weapon in the service of his desire for vengeance; he lacked natural emotions which would have linked him to other people; he lacked, and this was unmistakable, the warmth of trust. Contact with him was stimulating, yes, but not pleasant, not comfortable. He didn't succeed in being like everybody else, and after he had tried in vain not to be conspicuous, he bore his difference with a kind of defiance, a kind of pride, and behind it a lurking hostility which, since he himself did not find it comfortable either, he covered with the sugar-coating of an officious politeness; even when he bowed it was a kind of reproach, as though it was the fault of his environment that he was a Jew.

Most Andorrans did nothing to him. Which means they did nothing good to him either.

On the other hand, there were some Andorrans with a freer, more progressive outlook (as they called it), people who felt under an obligation to be humane. They esteemed the Jew, as they stressed, precisely on account of his Jewish characteristics, the acuteness of his intelligence, and so on. They stood by him till his death, which was horrible, so horrible and beastly that even those Andorrans were shocked who had never been touched by the realisation that the whole of life was horrible.

That is to say, they didn't really feel sorry for him, or to speak frankly, they didn't miss him—they merely waxed indignant over those who had killed him and over the way it had been done, particularly over the way it had been done.

They talked about it for a long time.

Until one day facts emerged which the dead man couldn't have known: he was a foundling, whose parents were later traced, an Andorran like the rest of us.

But every time they looked in the mirror the Andorrans saw to their horror that they themselves bore the features of Judas, each one of them. Thou shalt not make thyself any image of God, says the Bible. This may also be taken to mean God as the living essence in every individual, that which cannot be grasped. This is a sin which, as it is committed against us, we in our turn commit almost unceasingly.

Except when we love.

*SCENE III**

(*The sound of a lathe, a carpenter's shop, Andri and a Journeyman carpenter, each with a finished chair.*)

ANDRI: I've played outside left too, when no one else wanted to. Of course I will, if your team will have me.

JOURNEYMAN: Have you any football boots?

ANDRI: No.

JOURNEYMAN: Well, you'll need a pair.

ANDRI: How much do they cost?

JOURNEYMAN: I've got an old pair, I'll sell them to you. Of course, you'll also need black shorts, and a yellow jersey, and yellow stockings of course.

ANDRI: I'm better on the right, but if you need a left-winger I expect I shall be able to take a corner.

(*Andri rubs his hands.*)

That'll be smashing, Fedri, if it comes off.

JOURNEYMAN: Why shouldn't it?

ANDRI: That's smashing.

JOURNEYMAN: I'm the captain and you're my friend.

ANDRI: I'll train.

JOURNEYMAN: But don't keep rubbing your hands together, otherwise all the spectators will start laughing.

(*Andri puts his hands in his trouser pockets.*)

Have you any cigarettes? Then give me one. He won't bawl me out! If he did he'd be scared of his own echo. Have you ever heard him bawl me out?

(*The Journeyman lights a cigarette.*)

ANDRI: That's smashing, Fedri, that you're my friend.

JOURNEYMAN: Your first chair?

ANDRI: What do you think of it?

(*The Journeyman takes Andri's chair and tries to pull the leg off, Andri laughs.*)

You won't pull those off.

JOURNEYMAN: That's what he does.

ANDRI: Just try!

(*The Journeyman tries in vain.*)

He's coming.

JOURNEYMAN: You're lucky.

ANDRI: Every proper chair is mortised. What do you mean lucky? Only things that are merely stuck together fall apart.

(*Enter the Carpenter.*)

CARPENTER: ... Write to these gentlemen that my name is Prader. A chair by Prader doesn't collapse, every child knows that. A chair by

* In the opening scenes: Andri is shown in love with Barblin, whom he believes to be his foster-sister, but who in fact is his half-sister. Their father, a radical school-teacher, has made considerable financial sacrifices to obtain an apprenticeship with a carpenter for Andri. But—"can a Jew be a good artisan?"—*Ed. Note.*

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Prader is a chair by Prader. And anyhow, paid is paid. In a word, I don't haggle.

(*To the two.*)

Are you on holiday?

(*The Journeyman dodges away fast.*)

Who has been smoking here again?

(*Andri doesn't answer.*)

I can smell it.

(*Andri says nothing.*)

If at least you had the guts—

ANDRI: To-day is Saturday.

CARPENTER: What has that to do with it?

ANDRI: About my apprenticeship test. You said, on the last Saturday of the month. Here is my first chair.

(*The Carpenter takes a chair.*)

Not that one, Mr. Prader, the other one.

CARPENTER: To become a carpenter isn't so simple, when it's not in your blood. Not simple at all. And how could it be in your blood? I told your father so at the very beginning. Why don't you go into selling? If someone hasn't grown up with timber, you see, with our timber—you people may praise your cedars of Lebanon, but in this country we work in Andorran oak, my boy.

ANDRI: That's beech.

CARPENTER: Do you think you have to teach me?

ANDRI: I thought you were testing me.

CARPENTER: (*Tries to pull out a leg of the chair.*)

ANDRI: Mr. Prader, that isn't mine!

CARPENTER: There—

(*The Carpenter pulls out the first leg.*)

What did I say?

(*The Carpenter pulls out the other three legs.*)

—like frogs' legs, like frogs' legs. And rubbish like that is supposed to be sold. A chair by Prader, do you know what that means?—There—(*The Carpenter throws the débris down at his feet*)—just look at it!

ANDRI: You're making a mistake.

CARPENTER: Here—this is a chair!

(*The Carpenter sits on the other chair.*)

Fifteen stone I weigh, more's the pity, fifteen stone, but a proper chair doesn't groan when a real man sits on it, and it doesn't wobble. Does this chair groan?

ANDRI: No.

CARPENTER: Does it wobble?

ANDRI: No.

CARPENTER: You see!

ANDRI: That's my chair!

CARPENTER: Then who made this rubbish?

ANDRI: I told you at the beginning.

CARPENTER: Fedri! Fedri!

(*The lathe stops.*)

I have nothing but trouble with you, that's the thanks one gets for taking your kind into the shop. I knew what it would be like.

(*Enter the Journeyman.*)

Fedri, are you a journeyman or what are you?

JOURNEYMAN: I—

CARPENTER: How long have you been with Prader & Son?

JOURNEYMAN: Five years.

CARPENTER: Which chair did you make? Look at them. This one or this one? Answer.

(*The Journeyman looks at the debris.*)

Answer frankly and honestly.

JOURNEYMAN: I...

CARPENTER: Did you mortise or didn't you?

JOURNEYMAN: Every proper chair is mortised....

CARPENTER: You hear that?

JOURNEYMAN: Only what is merely stuck together falls apart....

CARPENTER: You can go.

JOURNEYMAN: (*Starts in alarm.*)

CARPENTER: Into the workshop, I mean.

(*The Journeyman hurries out.*)

Let that be a lesson to you. But I knew your place wasn't in a workshop.

(*The Carpenter sits down and fills his pipe.*)

A pity about the wasted timber.

ANDRI: (*Says nothing.*)

CARPENTER: Use that for firewood.

ANDRI: No.

CARPENTER: (*Lights his pipe.*)

ANDRI: That's a dirty rotten trick.

CARPENTER: (*Lights his pipe.*)

ANDRI: I won't take back what I said. You're sitting on my chair, I tell you, you lie whenever it suits you and light your pipe. You, yes, you! I'm afraid of you, yes, I'm trembling. Why have I no rights in your eyes? I'm young, I thought to myself: I must be humble. There's no sense in it, you take no notice of proof. You're sitting on my chair. You don't give a damn about that. It makes no difference what I do, you always twist it against me, and there's no end to your scorn. I can't keep silent any longer, it's burning me up. Are you even listening to me? You sit there sucking at your pipe and I tell you to your face: You're lying. You know perfectly well what a dirty rotten trick you're playing. You're sitting on the chair I made and lighting your pipe. What harm have I done you? You don't want to admit that I'm any good. Why do you insult me? You all insult and jeer at me the whole time. How can you be stronger than the truth? You know very well what the truth is, you're sitting on it.

(*The Carpenter has at last lit his pipe.*)

You're without shame.

CARPENTER: Stop wheedling.

ANDRI: You look like a toad!

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CARPENTER: In the first place this isn't a Wailing Wall.

(*The Journeyman and two others give away their presence by giggling.*)

Do you want me to kick out your whole football team?

(*The Journeyman and two others disappear.*) In the first place this isn't a Wailing Wall, in the second I never said that was why I was dismissing you. I didn't say that at all. I've got another job for you. Take off your apron! I'll show you how to write out orders. Are you listening while your master is speaking? For every order you bring in with your wheedling you will get ten shillings. Let's say a pound for three orders? A whole pound! That's what your kind have in their blood, believe me, and everyone should do what he has in his blood.... You can earn money, Andri, money, lots of money....

(*Andri stands motionless.*)

Agreed?

(*The Carpenter stands up and slaps Andri on the back.*)

I've got your interests at heart.

(*The Carpenter goes, the lathe starts up again.*)

ANDRI: But I wanted to be a carpenter....

*SCENE VII**

(*Sacristy, the Priest and Andri*)

PRIEST: Why are you so upset?

ANDRI: (*Says nothing.*)

PRIEST: Andri, we must have a talk together. Your foster-mother wishes it. She is very worried about you.... Sit down!

ANDRI: (*Says nothing.*)

PRIEST: Do sit down, Andri! (*Andri says nothing.*)

PRIEST: You won't sit down? (*Andri says nothing.*)

PRIEST: I can understand, this is the first time you've been here. More or less. I remember they once sent you to fetch your football from behind the altar when it came sailing in.

(*The Priest laughs.*)

ANDRI: What are we to talk about, Reverend Father?

PRIEST: Sit down! (*Andri says nothing.*)

PRIEST: So you won't sit down? (*Andri says nothing.*)

PRIEST: Very well then.

ANDRI: Is it true, Reverend Father, that I am different from everyone else?

(*Pause.*)

PRIEST: Andri, I want to tell you something.

ANDRI: I'm impertinent, I know.

PRIEST: I understand your distress. But you must know that we like you, Andri, just as you are. Hasn't your foster-father done everything he could for you? I hear he sold land so that you could become a carpenter.

ANDRI: But I'm not going to become a carpenter.

PRIEST: Why not?

ANDRI: My sort think of nothing but money all the time, people say, so my place isn't in the workshop, says the carpenter, but in the salesroom. I'm going to be a salesman, Reverend Father.

PRIEST: Very well then.

ANDRI: But I wanted to be a carpenter.

PRIEST: Why don't you sit down?

ANDRI: You're mistaken, Reverend Father, I think. Nobody likes me. The innkeeper says I'm impertinent, and the carpenter thinks so too, I believe. And the doctor says I'm ambitious, and my sort have no guts.

PRIEST: Sit down!

ANDRI: Is it true, Reverend Father, that I have no guts?

PRIEST: It may be that there is something harassed about you, Andri.

ANDRI: And Peider says I'm a coward.

PRIEST: A coward, why?

ANDRI: Because I'm a Jew.

PRIEST: Fancy paying attention to Peider!

ANDRI: (*Says nothing.*)

PRIEST: Andri, I want to tell you something.

ANDRI: One shouldn't keep thinking of oneself all the time, I know. But I can't help it, Reverend Father, that's the way it is. I can't help wondering all the time whether what the others say about me is true: that I'm not like them, not gay, not jolly, just not like them. And you too think there is something harassed about me, Reverend Father. I can quite understand that nobody likes me. I don't like myself when I think about myself.

(*The Priest stands up.*)

Can I go now?

PRIEST: Now listen to me!

ANDRI: What do people want from me, Reverend Father?

PRIEST: Why are you so suspicious?

ANDRI: They all put their hands on my shoulder.

PRIEST: Do you know what you are, Andri?

(*The Priest laughs.*)

You don't know, so I shall tell you.

(*Andri stares at him.*)

* Andri has asked the teacher for permission to marry Barblin. His father, too cowardly to disclose to the family the truth of Andri's origin, refused without explanation. Andri is convinced that the reason for his father's refusal is that he does not want his daughter to marry a Jew. The Priest of the village tries to console him.—*Ed. Note.*

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A splendid fellow! In your own way. A splendid fellow! I have been watching you, Andri, for years—

ANDRI: Watching?

PRIEST: Of course.

ANDRI: Why does everybody watch me?

PRIEST: I like you, Andri, more than all the others, yes, precisely because you are different from all the others. Why do you shake your head? You are cleverer than they are. Indeed you are. I like that about you, Andri, and I'm glad that you have come to see me and that I have had the chance to tell you so.

ANDRI: That isn't true.

PRIEST: What isn't true?

ANDRI: I'm not different. I don't want to be different. And even if he's three times stronger than me, that Peider, I'll beat the daylight out of him in front of everybody in the square; I've sworn that to myself—

PRIEST: As far as I'm concerned you're welcome to.

ANDRI: I've sworn it to myself—

PRIEST: I don't like him either.

ANDRI: I don't want to be popular. I shall stand up for myself. I'm not a coward—and I'm not cleverer than the others, Reverend Father; I don't want you to say that.

PRIEST: Will you listen to me now?

ANDRI: No.

(*Andri draws away.*)

ANDRI: I don't like having everyone's hands on my shoulders all the time.

(*Pause.*)

PRIEST: You really don't make it easy for one.

(*Pause.*)

PRIEST: To be brief, your foster-mother came to see me. She was here for more than four hours. The good woman is very unhappy. You don't come to meals any more, she says, and you won't talk to anyone. She says you don't believe that people are thinking of your well-being.

ANDRI: Everyone is thinking of my well-being!

PRIEST: Why do you laugh?

ANDRI: If he's thinking of my well-being, Reverend Father, why is he willing to give me everything, but not his own daughter, why?

PRIEST: It is his right as a father—

ANDRI: But why? Why? Because I'm a Jew.

PRIEST: Don't shout!

ANDRI: (*Says nothing.*)

PRIEST: Haven't you any other idea in your head? I have told you, Andri, as a Christian, that I love you—but you have one unfortunate habit, I'm afraid I must say, all of you: whatever difficulties you come up against in life, you attribute absolutely everything to the fact that you are Jews. You really don't make things easy for one with your over-sensitiveness.

(*Andri says nothing.*)

PRIEST: You're crying.

ANDRI: (*Sobs, covering his face with his hands.*)

PRIEST: What has happened? Answer me. What's the matter? I'm asking you what has happened, Andri! Why don't you speak, Andri? You're shivering. You've lost your senses. How can I help you if you don't speak? Pull yourself together, Andri! Do you hear? Andri! Remember you're a man! Well, I don't know.

ANDRI: My Barblin!

(*Andri lets his hands fall from his face and stares in front of him.*)

She can't love me, no one can, I can't love myself....

(*Enter a sacristan with a chasuble.*)

ANDRI: Can I go now?

(*The sacristan unbuttons the Priest.*)

PRIEST: You can still stay.

(*The sacristan dresses the Priest for Mass.*)

PRIEST: You said it yourself: how can other people love us if we don't love ourselves? Our Lord said: Love thy neighbour as thyself. He said: As thyself. We must accept ourselves, and that is what you don't do, Andri. Why do you want to be like the others? You're cleverer than they, believe me, you're more alert. Why won't you admit that? There is a spark in you. Why do you play football like all those boneheads, and rush about the field shouting, simply in order to be an Andorran? They don't like you, I know. And I know why. There's a spark in you. You think. Why shouldn't there also be some among God's creatures who have more intelligence than feeling? I tell you, that is exactly what I admire about you people. Why do you look at me like that? There is a spark in all of you. Think of Einstein! And all the rest of them, whatever their names are. Think of Spinoza!

ANDRI: Can I go now?

PRIEST: No man can change his skin, Andri, no Jew and no Christian. Nobody. God wants us to be as he created us. Do you understand me? And when they say to you: Jews are cowards, then know that you are not a coward if you accept being a Jew. On the contrary. You are different from us. Do you hear me? I say: You are not a coward. Only if you try to be like all Andorrans, then you are a coward....

(*An organ starts to play.*)

ANDRI: Can I go now?

PRIEST: Think over what you yourself said, Andri: How can the others accept you, if you don't accept yourself?

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ANDRI: Can I go now . . . ?
PRIEST: Andri, have you understood me?

*SCENE IX**

(A room in the Teacher's house. The Señora is seated, Andri standing.)

SENORA: Since they don't want me to tell you why I came, Andri, I shall now put on my gloves and leave.
ANDRI: Señora, I don't understand a word.
SENORA: Soon you will understand everything.
(She puts on one glove.)
Do you know that you are handsome?
(Noise in the street.)
They have abused and maltreated you, Andri, but that will stop now. The truth will put them right; and you, Andri, are the only one here who need not fear the truth.
ANDRI: What truth?
(Fresh noise in the street.)
SENORA: I'm glad to have seen you.
ANDRI: Are you leaving us, Señora?
SENORA: I have been asked to go.
ANDRI: If you say no country is worse and no country is better than Andorra, why don't you stay here?
SENORA: Would you like me to?
(Noise in the street.)
I must go. I'm from the other side of the frontier, you can hear how I exasperate them. A Black! That's what they call us here, I know. . . .
(She puts on the other glove.)
There are lots of other things I should like to tell you, and a lot of things I should like to ask. I should like to have a long talk with you. But we shall see each other again, I hope. . . .
(She is ready.)
We shall see each other again.
(She looks round once more.)
So this is where you grew up?
ANDRI: Yes.
(Noise in the street.)
SENORA: I ought to go now.
(She remains seated.)
When I was your age—that goes very quickly, Andri, you're twenty now and can't believe it: people meet, love, part, life is in front of you, and when you look in the mirror, suddenly it is behind you; you don't seem to yourself very different, but suddenly it is other people who are twenty. . . . When I was your age—my father, an officer, had been killed in the war. I knew how he thought, and I didn't want to think like him. We wanted a different world. We were young like you, and what we were taught was murderous, we knew that. And we despised the world as it is, we saw through it and dared to want another one. And we tried to create another one. We wanted not to be afraid of people. Not about anything in the world. We didn't want to lie. When we saw that we were merely keeping silent about our fear, we hated each other. Our new world didn't last long. We crossed the frontiers again, back to where we had come from when we were as young as you. . . .
(She rises.)
Do you understand what I'm saying?
ANDRI: No.
SENORA: *(Goes up to Andri and kisses him.)*
ANDRI: Why do you kiss me?
SENORA: I must go.
(Noise in the street.)
Shall we see each other again?
ANDRI: I should like to.
SENORA: I always wished I had never known my father and mother. No one, when he sees the world they have left behind for him, can understand his parents.
(Enter the Teacher and the Mother.)
I'm going, yes, I'm just going.
(Silence.)
So I'll say goodbye.
(Silence.)

SCENE XII†

(The square of Andorra. The square is surrounded by soldiers in black uniforms, with ordered arms, motionless. The Andorrans, like a herd in the pen, wait mutely to see what is going to happen. For a long time nothing happens. There is only whispering.)

DOCTOR: Keep calm, everyone. When the Jew Inspection is over everything will remain as before. No Andorran has anything to fear, we've got that in black and white. I shall remain the medical officer, the innkeeper will

* Andri's mother is the "Señora" from the neighbouring "country of the Blacks" where the teacher had spent some years as a student. She has heard of the teacher's experiences and comes to Andorra to find out news of her son. Her arrival arouses the anger of the xenophobic Andorran population. —*Ed. Note.*

† The murder of the Señora is used by the rulers of the "country of the Blacks" to invade Andorra. The Andorrans, who have always boasted of their sturdy independence which they are ready to defend to the last drop of blood, surrender without firing a shot. Andri, the Jew, is blamed for it all: he is said to have thrown the stone which killed the Señora. In the last scene of the play *die Schwarzen* ("the Blacks") hold a "Jew Inspection"—a ceremonial review of the whole population by an expert *Judenbeschauer* (Jew-inspector).—*Ed. Note.*

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remain the innkeeper, Andorran will remain Andorran....

(*A roll of drums.*)

JOURNEYMAN: Now they're distributing the black cloths.

(*Black cloths are handed out.*)

DOCTOR: No resistance now, whatever you do. (*Enter Barblin. She goes from group to group as though demented, pulling people's sleeves; they turn their backs on her; she whispers something that is unintelligible.*)

INNKEEPER: Now all of a sudden they say he isn't one.

SOMEBODY: What do they say?

INNKEEPER: That he isn't one.

DOCTOR: But you can see that he is at the first glance.

SOMEBODY: Who says that?

INNKEEPER: The teacher.

DOCTOR: Now we shall see.

INNKEEPER: Anyhow, he threw the stone.

SOMEBODY: Has that been proved?

INNKEEPER: Proved?!

DOCTOR: If he isn't one, why is he hiding? Why is he afraid? Why doesn't he come out into the square like the rest of us?

INNKEEPER: Quite right.

DOCTOR: Why shouldn't he be one?

INNKEEPER: Quite right.

SOMEBODY: They're supposed to have been looking for him all night.

DOCTOR: They found him.

SOMEBODY: I shouldn't like to be in his shoes.

INNKEEPER: Anyhow, he threw the stone—

(*They stop talking as a Black soldier approaches; they have to take the black cloths. The soldier passes on.*)

DOCTOR: They way they distribute these black cloths among a whole nation—without a single loud word. That's what I call organisation. Just look at it! How smoothly it goes.

SOMEBODY: But they stink.

(*They sniff at their cloths.*)

The sweat of fear....

(*Barblin comes up to the group containing the Doctor and the Innkeeper, tugs at their sleeves and whispers; they turn their backs on her; she wanders on.*)

What did she say?

DOCTOR: That's nonsense.

INNKEEPER: She'll pay dearly for that.

DOCTOR: No resistance now, whatever you do. (*Barblin goes up to another group, tugs at their sleeves and whispers; they turn their backs on her; she wanders on.*)

INNKEEPER: When I saw it with my own eyes! Right here on this spot. Has it been proved? he asks. Who else could have thrown the stone?

SOMEBODY: I only asked.

INNKEEPER: One of us perhaps?

SOMEBODY: I wasn't there.

INNKEEPER: But I was!

DOCTOR: (*Puts his finger to his lips.*)

INNKEEPER: Did I throw the stone perhaps?

DOCTOR: Quiet.

INNKEEPER: —I?

DOCTOR: We're not supposed to talk.

INNKEEPER: Here, right here on this spot, the stone was lying here, I saw it myself, a paving stone, a loose paving-stone, and he picked it up like this—

(*The Innkeeper picks up a paving stone.*)

—like this....

(*The Carpenter joins them.*)

CARPENTER: What's going on?

DOCTOR: Keep calm, everyone.

CARPENTER: What are these black cloths for?

DOCTOR: The Jew Inspection.

CARPENTER: What are we supposed to do with them?

(*The Black soldiers surrounding the square suddenly present arms: a Black, short, fat, pale, flabby, apparently harmless, crosses the square with brisk, short steps.*)

DOCTOR: That was him.

CARPENTER: Who?

DOCTOR: The Jew-inspector.

(*The soldiers order arms with a crash.*)

INNKEEPER: Suppose he makes a mistake?

DOCTOR: He never makes a mistake.

INNKEEPER: What would happen?

DOCTOR: Why should he make a mistake?

INNKEEPER: But just suppose. What would happen?

DOCTOR: He has an eye for it. Rely on that! He can smell it. He sees it simply by the walk, when someone walks across the square. He sees it by the feet.

SOMEBODY: Is that why we have to take our shoes off?

DOCTOR: He has been trained as a Jew-inspector. (*Barblin appears again, looking for groups to which she has not yet been. She finds the Journeyman, tugs his sleeve and whispers; the Journeyman pulls himself free.*)

JOURNEYMAN: Leave me alone!

(*The Doctor lights a cigarillo.*)

She's cracked. No one should walk across the square, she says. Let them take us all away. She wants to give a sign. She's cracked.

(*A Black soldier sees that the Doctor is smoking and approaches him with fixed bayonet at the ready. The Doctor starts with fright, throws his cigarillo on the asphalt, stamps it out and turns pale.*)

JOURNEYMAN: People say they have found him....

(*A roll of drums.*)

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JOURNEYMAN: This is it.

(*They put the cloths over their heads.*)

INNKEEPER: I'm not going to put a black cloth over my head!

SOMEBODY: Why not?

INNKEEPER: I won't do it.

JOURNEYMAN: Orders are orders.

INNKEEPER: What's the use of it?

DOCTOR: They do that wherever one of them has been hiding. That's what you get for it. If we had handed him over straight away—

(*The Idiot appears.*)

INNKEEPER: Why hasn't he got a black cloth?

SOMEBODY: They believe him when he says he isn't one.

(*The Idiot grins and nods and walks on, scrutinising the masked people and grinning. Only the Innkeeper is still standing unmasked.*)

INNKEEPER: I won't put a black cloth over my head!

MASKED FIGURE: Then he'll be flogged.

INNKEEPER: Me?

MASKED FIGURE: He hasn't read the yellow poster.

INNKEEPER: What do you mean, flogged?

(*A roll of drums.*)

MASKED FIGURE: This is it.

MASKED FIGURE: Keep calm, everyone.

(*A roll of drums.*)

INNKEEPER: I'm the innkeeper. Why don't they believe me? I'm the innkeeper, every child knows who I am, all of you, your innkeeper....

MASKED FIGURE: He's scared!

INNKEEPER: Don't you recognise me?

MASKED FIGURE: He's scared, he's scared!

(*Some masked figures laugh.*)

INNKEEPER: I won't put a black cloth over my head....

MASKED FIGURE: He'll be flogged.

INNKEEPER: I'm not a Jew!

MASKED FIGURE: He'll be put in a camp.

INNKEEPER: I'm not a Jew!

MASKED FIGURE: He hasn't read the yellow poster.

INNKEEPER: Don't you recognise me? You there! I'm the innkeeper. Who are you? You can't do that to me. You there! I'm the innkeeper, I'm the innkeeper. Don't you recognise me? You can't abandon me like that. You there! Who am I?

(*The Innkeeper has taken hold of the Teacher, who has just appeared with the Mother, unmasked.*)

TEACHER: So it was you who threw the stone, was it?

(*The Innkeeper drops the paving stone.*)

TEACHER: Why do you say my son did it?

(*The Innkeeper masks himself and mingles with the other masked figures. The Teacher and the Mother stand alone.*)

TEACHER: How they all mask themselves!

(*A whistle.*)

MASKED FIGURE: What does that mean?

MASKED FIGURE: Shoes off.

MASKED FIGURE: Who?

MASKED FIGURE: Everyone.

MASKED FIGURE: Now?

MASKED FIGURE: Shoes off, shoes off.

MASKED FIGURE: Why?

MASKED FIGURE: He hasn't read the yellow poster....

(*All the masked figures kneel down to take off their shoes. Silence. It takes quite a time.*)

TEACHER: How they all obey!

(*A Black soldier comes. The Teacher and the Mother also have to take a black cloth each.*)

MASKED FIGURE: One whistle means shoes off. According to the poster. And two whistles means march.

MASKED FIGURE: Barefoot?

MASKED FIGURE: What did he say?

MASKED FIGURE: Shoes off, shoes off.

MASKED FIGURE: And three whistles means cloths off.

MASKED FIGURE: Why cloths off?

MASKED FIGURE: All according to the poster.

MASKED FIGURE: What did he say?

MASKED FIGURE: All according to the poster.

MASKED FIGURE: What do two whistles mean?

MASKED FIGURE: March?

MASKED FIGURE: Why barefoot?

MASKED FIGURE: And three whistles mean cloth off.

MASKED FIGURE: Where are we to put our shoes?

MASKED FIGURE: Why cloth off?

MASKED FIGURE: Where are we to put our shoes?

MASKED FIGURE: Cloth off means, that's the Jew.

MASKED FIGURE: All according to the poster.

MASKED FIGURE: No Andorran has anything to fear.

MASKED FIGURE: What did he say?

MASKED FIGURE: No Andorran has anything to fear.

MASKED FIGURE: Where are we to put our shoes?

(*The Teacher, unmasked, walks in among the masked figures and is the only one standing up.*)

TEACHER: Andri is my son.

MASKED FIGURE: That's not our fault!

TEACHER: Do you hear what I say?

MASKED FIGURE: What is he saying?

MASKED FIGURE: He says Andri is his son.

MASKED FIGURE: Then why is he hiding?

TEACHER: I say Andri is my son.

MASKED FIGURE: Anyhow, he threw the stone.

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TEACHER: Which of you says that?
MASKED FIGURE: Where are we to put our shoes?
TEACHER: Why do you lie? One of you did it. Why do you say my son did it?—
(*A roll of drums.*)
They don't try to find out which of you is the murderer. Cover it up with a cloth! They don't want to know. Cover it up with a cloth! Let one of you continue to serve them with the hands of a murderer, they don't care. Position is everything. The innkeeper will remain an innkeeper, the medical officer a medical officer. Just look at them! See the way they put out their shoes in ranks. All according to the poster! And one of them is a treacherous murderer. Cover it up with a cloth! They hate only the one who reminds them of it—
(*A roll of drums.*)
What a nation you are! God in heaven, who fortunately for you doesn't exist, what a nation you are!
(*Enter the Soldier with the drum.*)
SOLDIER: Ready?
(*All the masked figures stand up with their shoes in their hands.*)
SOLDIER: Leave your shoes in the square. But tidily. Like in the Army. Understand? Shoe next to shoe? Got it? The Army is responsible for law and order. What kind of impression is that going to make! I said, shoe next to shoe. And no grumbling.
(*The Soldier examines the row of shoes.*)
MASKED FIGURE: I'm the innkeeper.
SOLDIER: Too far back!
(*The masked figure straightens out his shoes.*)
SOLDIER: I shall read out the order again.
(*Quiet.*)
"Citizens of Andorra! The Jew Inspection is a measure for the protection of the population in liberated areas, or for the restoration of law and order. No Andorran has anything to fear. For instructions see yellow poster." Quiet! "Andorra, 15th September, Commander-in-Chief."—Why haven't you got a cloth over your head?
TEACHER: Where is my son?
SOLDIER: Who?
TEACHER: Where is Andri?
SOLDIER: He's here, don't worry, he didn't slip through our net. He'll march. Barefoot like everyone else.
TEACHER: Did you understand what I said?
SOLDIER: Dress by the right! Close up!
TEACHER: Andri is my son.
SOLDIER: We shall soon see about that—
(*A roll of drums.*)
SOLDIER: Dress by the right! Close up!
(*The masked figures form up.*)
SOLDIER: All right then, citizens of Andorra, do you understand? Not a word is to be spoken when the Jew-inspector is here. Is that clear? Everything must be done right, that's important. When the Jew-inspector whistles, stop immediately. Understand? You're not expected to come to attention. Is that clear? Only the Army comes to attention, because they have practised it. Anyone who is not a Jew will be free. That's to say, you will go straight back to work. I shall beat the drum.
(*The Soldier does so.*)
Then you will walk forward one after the other. Anyone who doesn't stop when the Jew-inspector whistles will be shot out of hand. Is that clear?
(*The ringing of a bell.*)
TEACHER: Where is the priest at this hour?
SOLDIER: No doubt he is praying for the Jew!
TEACHER: The priest knows the truth—
(*Enter the Jew-inspector*)
SOLDIER: Silence!
(*The Black soldiers present arms and stand rigidly in this position until the Jew-finder, who behaves like a simple official, has sat down in the armchair in the centre of the square. The soldiers order arms. The Jew-inspector takes off his pince-nez, polishes them, puts them on again. The Teacher and the Mother are now also masked. The Jew-inspector waits until the bell has stopped ringing, thent he gies a sign and two blasts are blown on a whistle.*)
SOLDIER: The first one!
(*Nobody moves.*)
SOLDIER: Come on, come on!
(*The Idiot is the first to move.*)
Not you!
(*Nervous laughter among the masked figures.*)
Silence!
(*A drumbeat.*)
What's the matter, damn you? You're to walk across the square as you usually do. Now get going—march!
(*No one moves.*)
No Andorran has anything to fear....
(*Barblin, masked, steps forward.*)
Come here!
(*Barblin goes up to the Jew-inspector and throws the black cloth down at his boots.*)
What's the idea?
BARBLIN: This is the sign.
(*Movement among the masked figures.*) ...
Tell him, no Andorran will cross the square! Not one of us. Then let them flog us! Tell him! Then let them shoot us all!
(*Two Black soldiers seize Barblin, who struggles in vain. No one moves. The Black*

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soldiers all round have brought their rifles into the firing position. All without a sound. Barblin is dragged away.)

SOLDIER: ... All right, now get moving. One after the other. Have we got to flog you? One after the other.

(*Now they start walking.*)

Slowly, slowly!

(*Those who have gone past remove the cloths from their heads.*)

The cloths are to be folded up. But tidily! I said. Is this country a pigsty? The national emblem must be in the upper right-hand corner. What will our foreigners think of us!

(*Others walk too slowly.*)

Hurry up, can't you. Let's get this over.

(*The Jew-inspector studies their walk carefully, but with the casualness of habit and bored by his own self-confidence. One figure trips over the paving-stone.*)

Just look at that!

MASKED FIGURE: My name is Prader.

SOLDIER: Go on.

MASKED FIGURE: Who tripped me up?

SOLDIER: Nobody.

(*The Carpenter takes off his cloth.*)

Go on, I said, go on. The next. And those who have gone past are to take their shoes at once. Do I have to tell you everything, God damn it? Is this a kindergarten?

CARPENTER: Somebody tripped me up.

SOLDIER: Silence!

(*One figure goes in the wrong direction.*)

You're like a bunch of chickens!

(*A few who have already gone past giggle.*)

MASKED FIGURE: I'm the medical officer.

SOLDIER: All right, all right.

DOCTOR: (*Takes off his cloth.*)

SOLDIER: Take your shoes.

DOCTOR: I can't see when I have a cloth over my head. I'm not used to it. How can I walk when I can't see the ground?

SOLDIER: Go on, I said, go on.

DOCTOR: It's an impertinence!

SOLDIER: The next.

(*Drumbeat.*)

Can't you put your blasted shoes on at home? I told you, those who are free are to take their shoes and beat it. What are you standing around gawping for?

(*Drumbeat.*)

The next.

DOCTOR: Where are my shoes? Somebody has taken my shoes. Those aren't my shoes.

SOLDIER: Why pick on that pair?

DOCTOR: They are standing in my place.

SOLDIER: It really is just like a kindergarten!

DOCTOR: Well, are those my shoes?

(*Drumbeat.*)

I'm not going without my shoes.

SOLDIER: Don't start kicking up a fuss!

DOCTOR: I'm not going barefoot. I'm not used to it. And speak properly to me, I'm not going to be spoken to in that tone.

SOLDIER: Well, what's the matter?

DOCTOR: I'm not kicking up a fuss.

SOLDIER: I don't know what you want.

DOCTOR: My shoes.

(*The Jew-inspector gives a sign. A blast is blown on the whistle.*)

SOLDIER: I'm on duty!

(*Drumbeat.*)

The next.

(*No one moves.*)

DOCTOR: Those aren't my shoes!

SOLDIER: (*Takes the shoes from his hand.*)

DOCTOR: I shall lodge a complaint, yes, I shall lodge a complaint, someone has switched my shoes, I shan't budge one step, and certainly not if I'm shouted at.

SOLDIER: Who do these shoes belong to?

DOCTOR: My name is Ferrer—

SOLDIER: Who do these shoes belong to?

(*He puts them down at the front by the footlights.*)

We shall see!

DOCTOR: I know very well who they belong to.

SOLDIER: Get a move on!

(*Drumbeat.*)

The next.

(*No one moves.*)

DOCTOR: —I've found them.

(*No one moves.*)

SOLDIER: Who is scared now?

(*Once more they go one after the other. The procedure has become automatic so that it is now tedious. One of those who has walked past the Jew-inspector and now takes the cloth from his head is the Journeyman.*)

JOURNEYMAN: What was that about the national emblem?

SOLDIER: Top right-hand corner.

JOURNEYMAN: Has he got through already?

(*The Jew-inspector gives a sign. Three blasts are blown on the whistle.*)

SOLDIER: Stop!

(*The masked figure stands still.*)

Off with your cloth!

(*The masked figure doesn't move.*)

Off with your cloth, Jew, do you hear!

(*The Soldier goes up to the masked figure and takes off his cloth. It is the Somebody, rigid with terror.*)

That's not him. He only looks like that because he's scared. It's not him. Don't be frightened! He looks quite different when he's jolly....

(*The Jew-inspector has risen, walks round the Somebody and scrutinises him for a long time like an indifferent but conscientious official.*

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The Somebody's appearance visibly changes. The Jew-inspector holds his ball-point pen under the Somebody's chin.)

SOLDIER: Head up, man. Don't stare down at the ground like one of them!

(The Jew-inspector also studies his feet, sits down again and gives a negligent sign.)

SOLDIER: Beat it, man!

(Tension relaxes in the crowd.)

DOCTOR: He doesn't make mistakes. What did I say? He doesn't make mistakes, he has an eye for it....

(Drumbeat.)

SOLDIER: The next.

(They start walking again in single file.)

What sort of filthy behaviour is that? Can't you use your own handkerchief when you sweat? Whatever next!

(A masked figure picks up the paving stone.)

SOLDIER: Hey, what's that fellow up to?

MASKED FIGURE: I'm the innkeeper—

SOLDIER: What are you fussing about that paving stone for?

MASKED FIGURE: I'm the innkeeper—I—I—

(The Innkeeper remains masked.)

SOLDIER: That's no reason to wet your pants!

(There are giggles here and there, as people giggle over a well-liked but ridiculous figure; in the midst of this nervous hilarity come three blasts on the whistle, following a sign from the Jew-inspector.)

SOLDIER: Stop!

(The Teacher takes off his cloth.)

SOLDIER: Not you, that one there, the other one!

(The masked figure does not move.)

Off with your cloth!

(The Jew-inspector stands up.)

DOCTOR: He has an eye for it. What did I say? He can see it by the walk....

SOLDIER: Three paces forward!

DOCTOR: He's got him....

SOLDIER: Three paces back!

(The masked figure obeys.)

Laugh!

DOCTOR: He can hear it from the laugh....

SOLDIER: Laugh, or they'll fire.

(The masked figure tries to laugh.)

Louder!

(The masked figure tries to laugh.)

DOCTOR: If that isn't a Jew's laugh....

(The Soldier pushes the masked figure.)

SOLDIER: Off with your cloth, Jew, there's no help for you. Off with your cloth. Show your face. Or they'll fire.

TEACHER: Andri?!

SOLDIER: I shall count three.

(The masked figure does not move.)

SOLDIER: One—

TEACHER: No!

SOLDIER: Two—

(The Teacher pulls off the figure's cloth.)

SOLDIER: Three....

TEACHER: My Son!

(The Jew-inspector walks round Andri, examining him.)

TEACHER: He is my son!

(The Jew-inspector examines Andri's feet, then gives a sign, just as negligently as before, but a different sign, and two Black soldiers take charge of Andri.)

CARPENTER: Let's go.

MOTHER: *(Steps forward and takes off her cloth.)*

SOLDIER: What the hell does she want?

MOTHER: I shall tell the truth.

SOLDIER: Is Andri your son?

MOTHER: No.

SOLDIER: Did you hear that! Did you hear that!

MOTHER: But Andri is my husband's son—

INNKEEPER: Let her prove it.

MOTHER: It's true. And Andri didn't throw the stone, I know that too, because Andri was at home when it happened. I swear to that. I was at home myself. I know that and I swear it by God Almighty who is our judge in eternity.

INNKEEPER: She's lying.

MOTHER: Let him go!

(The Jew-inspector stands up again.)

SOLDIER: Silence!

(The Jew-inspector goes up to Andri and repeats the examination, then he empties out Andri's trouser pockets; coins fall out; the Andorrans recoil from the rolling money as though it were lava; the Soldier laughs.)

SOLDIER: Jew money.

DOCTOR: He doesn't make mistakes....

TEACHER: What do you mean, Jew money? It's your money, our money. What else have you in your own pockets?

(The Jew-inspector feels Andri's hair.)

TEACHER: Why don't you speak?

ANDRI: *(Smiles.)*

TEACHER: He is my son, he mustn't die, my son, my son!

(The Jew-inspector leaves; the Blacks present arms; the Soldier takes charge.)

SOLDIER: Where did you get that ring?

CARPENTER: He has valuables too....

SOLDIER: Give it here!

ANDRI: No.

SOLDIER: Come on, hand it over!

ANDRI: No—please...

SOLDIER: Or they'll hack your finger off.

ANDRI: No! No!

(Andri struggles.)

CARPENTER: How he fights for his valuables....

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DOCTOR: Let's go....

(*Andri is surrounded by Black soldiers and out of sight, when he gives vent to a scream, then silence. Andri is led away.*)

TEACHER: Slink away. Go home. You know nothing. You didn't see it. Feel sick. Go home to your mirrors and feel sick.

(*The Andorrans disappear in all directions, everyone takes his shoes.*)

SOLDIER: He won't be needing shoes any more.

(*The Soldier goes.*)

SOMEBODY: The poor Jew.

INNKEEPER: What can we do about it?

CARPENTER: Give me a whisky.

That with the finger was going too far....

DOCTOR: I'll have a whisky too.

CARPENTER: His shoes are still there.

DOCTOR: Let's go inside.

CARPENTER: That with the finger was going too far....

(*The Carpenter, the Doctor and the Innkeeper disappear into the Inn. The stage grows dark; the juke-box begins to play of its own accord, the same record. When the stage lights up again, Barblin is on her knees whitewashing the asphalt of the square; her head has been shaved. Enter the Priest. The music stops.*)

BARBLIN: I'm whitewashing, I'm whitewashing.

PRIEST: Barblin!

BARBLIN: Why shouldn't I whitewash, Reverend Father, my father's house?

PRIEST: You're talking wildly.

BARBLIN: I'm whitewashing.

PRIEST: That isn't your father's house, Barblin.

BARBLIN: I'm whitewashing, I'm whitewashing.

PRIEST: There's no sense in it.

BARBLIN: There's no sense in it.

(*Enter the Innkeeper.*)

INNKEEPER: What is she doing here?

BARBLIN: Here are his shoes.

INNKEEPER: (*Is about to fetch the shoes.*)

BARBLIN: Stop.

PRIEST: She has lost her reason.

BARBLIN: I'm whitewashing, I'm whitewashing. What are you doing? If you don't see what I see, then you see I am whitewashing.

INNKEEPER: Stop that!

BARBLIN: Blood, blood, blood everywhere.

INNKEEPER: Those are my tables!

BARBLIN: My tables, your tables, our tables.

INNKEEPER: Tell her to stop it!

BARBLIN: Who are you?

PRIEST: I've tried everything.

BARBLIN: I'm whitewashing, I'm whitewashing, so that we shall have a white Andorra, you murderers, a snow-white Andorra; I shall whitewash all of you, all of you.

(*Enter the former Soldier.*)

BARBLIN: Tell him to leave me alone, Reverend Father, he has his eye on me, Reverend Father, I'm engaged.

SOLDIER: I'm thirsty.

BARBLIN: He doesn't know me.

SOLDIER: Who is she?

BARBLIN: The Jew's whore, Barblin.

SOLDIER: Get out of it!

BARBLIN: Who are you?

(*Barblin laughs.*)

Where has your drum got to?

SOLDIER: Stop laughing!

BARBLIN: Where have you taken my brother?

(*Enter the Carpenter.*)

BARBLIN: Where have you come from, all of you, where are you going to, all of you, why don't you go home, all of you, all of you, and hang yourselves?

CARPENTER: What does she say?

BARBLIN: Him too!

INNKEEPER: She's off her rocker.

SOLDIER: Get rid of her.

BARBLIN: I'm whitewashing.

CARPENTER: What's the idea of that?

BARBLIN: I'm whitewashing, I'm whitewashing.

(*Enter the Doctor.*)

BARBLIN: Have you seen a finger?

DOCTOR: (*Speechless.*)

BARBLIN: Haven't you seen a finger?

SOLDIER: That's enough of that!

PRIEST: Leave her alone.

INNKEEPER: She's a public nuisance.

CARPENTER: Tell her to leave us alone.

INNKEEPER: What can we do about it?

JOURNEYMAN: I warned her.

DOCTOR: The proper place for her is a lunatic asylum.

BARBLIN: (*Stares.*)

PRIEST: Her father hanged himself in the schoolroom. She is looking for her father, she is looking for her hair, she is looking for her brother.

(*All, apart from the Priest and Barblin, go into the inn.*)

PRIEST: Barblin, do you hear who is speaking to you?

BARBLIN: (*Whitewashes the asphalt.*)

PRIEST: I've come to take you home.

BARBLIN: I'm whitewashing.

PRIEST: I'm Father Benedict.

BARBLIN: (*Whitewashes the asphalt.*)

PRIEST: I'm Father Benedict.

BARBLIN: Where were you, Father Benedict, when they took away our brother like a beast to the slaughter, where were you? You have turned black, Father Benedict....

PRIEST: (*Says nothing.*)

BARBLIN: Father is dead.

PRIEST: I know, Barblin.

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BARBLIN: And my hair?
PRIEST: I pray for Andri every day.
BARBLIN: And my hair?
PRIEST: Your hair, Barblin, will grow again—
BARBLIN: Like the grass out of the graves.
(*The Priest starts to lead Barblin away, but she suddenly stops and turns back to the shoes.*)
PRIEST: Barblin—Barblin....
BARBLIN: Those are his shoes. Don't touch them. When he comes back, those are his shoes.
CURTAIN.

Reconstruction

On the building lot at Vaugirard
Most of the workers are Algerian.
They begin early, a pneumatic drill
Rivetting the dawn at seven o'clock:
Bang of hammers, creak of windlass,
Clash of iron supports.

But, if you watch closely,
Always the same amount gets done—
Enough but not too much.
They flirt with girls at a window,
Flash mirror-messages,
Chant endless exile songs.

And then the overseers come,
Middle-class Frenchmen, neatly dressed, serious.
If "the quality of affection" is important,
So also is the quality of disaffection
Saying: 'I work as I am paid"
Or "These are not *our* houses!"

It reminds me of a Dublin barge
Passing through a lock on the Grand Canal.
It took four men, a donkey,
And twenty onlookers, half a morning.
While the water rose they smoked,
Discussed horses, or just chewed grass.

Today, in Paris, whole areas change,
The horizon heavy with cranes.
When a working class district goes residential
So also go colourful markets, cheap restaurants.
Only some concierges may remain,
Encased in new concrete like fossils.

John Montague

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Mordecai Richler

London Province

As a boy England signified many things to me, but I was never drawn toward it. I was a Labour-Zionist. I despised the British because they stood between us and our homeland. I used to sit by the radio with the rest of the family when Churchill spoke. "... some chicken, some neck...." I can recall toothy photographs of Elizabeth and Margaret in their Brownie uniforms. The blitz. "The King," my mother said one night, "only pours one inch of hot water into his bath now. It's to set an example for the people."

"Who knows what he does when he's alone in the toilet," my father said.

We played commandos in the alley behind the synagogue. I read books by G. A. Henty and H. G. Wells. On my way home from school each morning I passed the armoury of the Canadian Grenadier Guards and outside, under a funny fur hat, there always stood some tall unblinking *goy*. "If they were ordered to do it," I was told, "they'd even march over a cliff. There's discipline for you." I helped collect money for *Bundles-for-Britain* and later, from the same houses, more money to buy arms for the *Hagannah*. A British Ferry Command pilot with a waxed moustache came round to our house to sell my father a war bond. He was in uniform. "The Russians aren't a bad lot, actually," he said. "You have to look at it this way. They never had an industrial revolution. They're squeezing a hundred years of progress into a generation."

He had been misinformed. We were not reds.

"In Finland," my father said, "they had to chain them to their guns. That sort of thing is bad for morale."

England was also George Formby, Tommy Farr, and fog. "Elementary, my dear Watson." Big Ben. My mother coming home with puffy eyes from *Mrs. Miniver*. On Empire Day in Shawbridge, the ghetto's summer swimming hole, a young girl drowned after eating too many *latkas*. Over the mountain, where there was a real lake, the Anglo-Saxons swam. England was where they drank tea all the time. They were the finest craftsmen in the world. Once, one of ours had been their Prime Minister. England meant the fox hunt. Bulldog Drummond. Charles Laughton throwing a chicken leg over his shoulder. It also meant our own Scots school masters making us memorise Tennyson, *"Break, break, break / At the foot of thy crags, O Sea,"* and Scott, *"The stag at eve had drunk its fill / As danced the moon on Monan's rill."* We felt no attachment.

At college, where I began to borrow from a different set of ideas, England came into another, equally unfair focus. A literary experience. The beautiful novels of Jane Austen. Decency. Wit. Political maturity. And above all, for us, the poems of W. H. Auden. We cultivated a *New Statesman* outlook, wore tweed jackets with leather arm patches, and filled our shelves with Penguins. I met somebody who had had a poem turned down by *Horizon*. He had a note of rejection that was actually signed by Cyril Connolly. I let my hair grow long and, when I could afford it, ate at Italian restaurants. On each table there was an empty chianti bottle plugged with a coloured candlestick. I recommended Angelo's *Trattoria* to an old school friend. "They serve the most exciting *scampi*," I said.

"Oi," he said. "Look at you."

I suppose my elder brother was embarrassed by me and my irreverent friends. Suspicious, hostile, he began to ask me what seemed like absurd questions.

"Do you ever drink sherry?"

This *essay continues our series of personal memoirs of the forties and fifties: "On the Bridge" by Colin Wilson (April, 1960); "Lone Voices" by Kingsley Amis (July, 1960); "Beyond Believing" by Cyril Connolly (April, 1961). Mr. Richler is a young (born 1931) Canadian writer who is the author, among other books, of* Son of a Smaller Hero *and* Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz *(published by André Deutsch.* The Incomparable Atuk *will appear in the autumn.*

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"Well, sometimes. *Tio Pepe.*"

(I was, at the time, reading *The Quest for Corvo.*)

"Aha. And what do you and your longhair friends do until four o'clock in the morning? Read poetry aloud to each other maybe?"

"Sometimes. Or we listen to records."

"Classical?"

"Well, yeah. So?"

"Tell me, are you scared of snakes?"

"What?"

Finally, I discovered what was behind the inquiry. An issue of *Esquire* on my brother's desk with an article titled, Is YOUR KID BROTHER A HOMOSEXUAL? I took to walking about the house with my hands held out in front of me, the wrists limp. At the supper table, a couple of nights later, I said to my brother, "Be a dear, will you, and pass me another knish. *Merci.*"

"You're going to end up in Greenwich Village," he said. "A bum."

I LEFT for Europe instead.

My mother had been paying fifty cents a week on an insurance policy for me since I was born. The policy wouldn't have come due until I was twenty-one, but, by cashing it in ahead of time, I was able to leave. I can still remember the insurance man waving his cheque at me across the desk. A priest and his censor. "Do you realise," he said, "that the minute I hand this over you will be walking the streets *completely unprotected*?"

The Korean War was on at the time.

"You're a very bad risk, you know. The rates are soon going to double on fellas your age. But if you were to act now. . . ."

To my family, leaving for Europe seemed like more than ingratitude: it was a betrayal. They had put that continent, its pogroms and gas ovens, bitterly behind them. They couldn't understand me.

"If you want to be a writer so badly, O.K.," my father said. "But isn't there plenty to write about here?"

I assured my family that they were small ordinary people, not the sort André Malraux would bother about.

"You know everything," my father said. I did not disagree.

I sailed with a college friend on the *Franconia* in September, 1951, and our first contact with England was grimy Liverpool. On the boat train we were amazed by the enormous dessert spoons, grit in your lukewarm tea, and a notice that read, *"Gentlemen will please lift the seat."* We froze. I remember those first weeks in London as an unending fight against the bone-chilling dampness. A spill of shillings down the gas meter. We made the required, wearying pilgrimages to the British Museum, the Tate, and Westminster, scornfully avoiding (though we were both desperate to see it) the Changing of the Guard, as that would have made us tourists. My mother's first food parcel arrived. Two huge tins of powdered milk, a roll of toilet paper, a package of napkins, two tins of soup (Crosse & Blackwell), some sardines, cutlery for two, and a package of airmail envelopes. She wrote that if I didn't like the powdered milk I could surely sell it for a small fortune. My father saw me in danger of being devoured by all the *shiksas* of Europe. "They would do ANYTHING," he wrote, "for a Canadian passport."

I WAS FILLED by the most exhilarating sense of personal freedom. Nobody knew me. I could, as I chose, sleep in until noon or go to the movies. My mother wasn't there to worry or my father to lecture. Neither could anybody file a report if I got drunk and disgraced myself at any pub. I smoked more than was good for me and I ate when I felt like it. I rode the buses. Earlier, in Montreal, I had earnestly assured my troubled relatives that their city was a cultural desert, a colonial pimple, and I was off to enrich myself at the imperial fountainhead, but once I was there and rid of them, all I thought about was girls. *Where were the girls?* Take me, have me. Oh, my God, the ones I saw in the pubs were so depressingly lumpy, all those years of bread-and-drippings and sweets and fishpaste sandwiches having entered their young bodies like poison, coming out here as a moustache, there as a chilblain, and like lead through the teeth. And the elegant *shiksas* of Belgravia, the ones I ate with my eyes, who for generations had packed off their tomato-faced husbands (C. Aubrey Smith, Ralph Richardson) to take India, Canada, and Rhodesia (or come back, God forbid, to get four white feathers in the mail); those insufferably arrogant-looking women, I thought, would see me only as a boy late with the avocado delivery from Harrod's.

Once, when I stopped a lady on Park Lane to ask for the Dorchester, she told me that the service entrance was round to the right. On another occasion the doorman prevented me

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from entering the Savoy. I was, I must say, very properly dressed. "What are *you* doing?" he asked.

"I have an appointment here."

"With one of *our* guests?" he asked.

I KNEW NOBODY. And, within a week, I was miserable with my freedom. I left my friend and continued on to Paris alone, just as Scott and Ernest had before me. Paris, anyway, was what I had always dreamed of. Like an unhappy childhood, it belonged to young writers. London was no more than a gum-grey, depressing place to stop.

*Goys*ville.

Tasteless white bread . . . sawdust bangers at the local . . . brussel sprouts floating in tepid greasy water. I stood in a West End queue to get a balcony seat for a political comedy and, sure enough, by the end of act three, both Labour and Tory characters turned out to be jolly good chaps under the skin. (With wogs you can never tell, but nobody British is ever a bastard.) At the Windmill Theatre, I watched an ageing stripper with jellied thighs. No sooner had the febrile comics bounced onstage—

—Did you know that we've got a plane bigger than any plane the Yanks have ever built?

—No!

—Yes, we have. Salisbury Plain.

—than the countrymen in tweed caps, who filled the first two rows, lit matches and bent over their girlie books.

—I've just been to Brighton to watch the football matches under the sea.

—Ruddy fool! There are no football matches in the sea.

—Haven't you heard? There are twenty thousand leagues under the sea.

MY FIRST IMPRESSION of London was that the workers were short with black teeth and the others were long with a tendency to stammer. With my bleeding colonial heart, filled as I was with war-guilt (all I had ever given up for the duration was American comic books), I inquired everywhere about the blitz. "How you must have suffered. . . ." But everyone spoke longingly of the blitz; their time of unboredom. "People were so friendly, then."

My impatience with all things British culminated in a restaurant quarrel.

"I'd like an egg-and-tomato sandwich, please," I said to the waitress.

"It's not on the menu, Sir."

"I know. But would you see if you could get me one."

"I'm sorry, Sir. We don't serve egg-and-tomato sandwiches."

"You serve egg sandwiches, don't you?"

"Yes, Sir."

"And you serve tomato sandwiches?"

"Yes we do, Sir."

"Well, then, if it's not too much trouble, could you please make me an egg-and-tomato sandwich?"

"But we don't serve——"

"Look, tell you what. Order me an egg sandwich *and* a tomato sandwich. I'll pay for both and——"

"Americans," the man at the next table muttered.

"—you make me a combination sandwich of the two."

"But that," she said, for she was obviously nobody's fool, "would be an egg and tomato sandwich."

"Yes," I said, smiling helpfully.

"Egg and tomato sandwiches are *not* on the menu. If you would like to see the manager. . . ."

NOTHING seemed to be more squalid or unyielding than London, but I was to return again and again, and finally I was to live there.

To begin with, I was prodigiously ignorant. I didn't dare enter the private bar in a pub because I thought you had to be a member. I had come back from Paris with the address of a London literary man. A professional contact. It was my first experience of the London literary life.

The man was beery, brilliant, middle-aged, and cruelly disappointed in himself; he lived penuriously in a flat off Kensington Church Street.

"Whom would you like to meet?" he asked

I was terrified.

"Grah'm?"

"Greene?"

He nodded.

"Hell, no."

"Thurber's in town. He's coming tomorrow night. Jimmy's a frightfully talented chap, don't you think?"

"Sure. Only I'm busy tomorrow night."

We settled on Dylan. Thomas phoned several times, on each occasion from a pub close to

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Kensington Church Street, but fortunately for me he never turned up. I asked my host about a writer I admired.

"Oh, *him*. Can't get his roger up any more, don't you know?"

I inquired about somebody else.

"My feeling," he said, "is I don't mind how many policemen he buggers in his flat, but I'd thrash him if he laid a hand on my son."

The phone rang. "No, he isn't here," my host said, assuming a false voice. "Oh, it's *you*." He talked warmly for a while. Finally, he hung up. "What a boor Jack is! No taste whatsoever."

I was asked round to the pub, where my host invited me and his many friends to a round of drinks. He introduced me, his smile ironic, as a most talented young man from Canada, and his friends smiled cleverly too. My host ordered another round. When the barmaid came round to collect he turned quickly to me. "Damn. Forgot my money at the flat. Would you mind terribly...."

At Cambridge, the secretary of the literary society invited me to a sherry party for George Barker, whom he had asked down from London to speak. The secretary kept a wooden cigarette box and he had Barker, as other poets had already done, autograph it. Barker complied with a grin. He wore a cloth cap and made the obligatory deprecating remarks about academics. I disliked him for it. But, to my dismay, in the presence of these young Cambridge men, I found that I also affected a tougher working-class idiom and cursed more often than was natural for me.

A young man I met was obsessed with the ambition to emend and annotate the new edition of John Donne's poems and sermons for the Oxford University Press, but somebody else was asked instead. My friend took to sleeping round the clock. His father was a miner, he was a scholarship boy and had made a double first in classics at King's. Whenever he stopped there to collect his mail, he asked me to wait outside the porter's gate. "Sorry," he'd say, "but you're not a member of the college."

Most of the working-class boys I met at Cambridge simply refused to leave. If they weren't made fellows, and only one or two of them were, they took jobs teaching at schools on the American airbase nearby. Anything, absolutely anything, to stay on.

Others were rich. Gentlemen.

I hit it off with a Girton girl, and called at a friend's rooms (his father was Governor-General of one of the colonies) to ask if I could have the run of his place for the afternoon. "Certainly," he said, and when I returned with the girl I found that he had left us a bottle of sherry and a charming note. Afterwards, he insisted that I come round immediately.

"What did you do?" he asked, flushed.

"Eh?"

"How does one go about it?" He told me drunkenly that he had known and wanted the girl for months, but he hadn't known how or if she would ever.... "How did you start it?" he asked.

I was too flattered to tell him that actually nothing of the sort had happened. "Well," I said, "it began with her sucking my toes. It's an old orthodox Jewish custom, you know."

He looked startled.

"How much," I asked slyly, "do you know about what *really* goes on at the bar-mitzvah ceremony?"

Jazz, I remember, was very popular at Cambridge, and a trip to London usually meant an evening with "Humph." Looking back, it was certainly one hell of a mix-up. Most of the Canadians carried rolled umbrellas with them everywhere, the West Indians were doing their utmost to cultivate a B.B.C. accent, and the public school boys were taking to jeans and jazz and sat around saying "man" and "dig."

Back in London I became, with George Lamming, a regular at the Mandrake Club. In our separate ways, Lamming and I were both puzzled by the British and fell in with other discontented and disappointed colonials: Australians, more Canadians, and West Indians. The kind of information we exchanged was fundamental. French francs worked in most gas meters. A landlady in Hampstead will admit coloured tenants, if they are not *very* coloured.

I was living in Highgate when Sir Anthony Eden led the Tories in the election. In the semi-detached houses all around, wherever there lived a salesman, shopkeeper, or accountant, who just yesterday slipped in under the middle-class wire, there was sure to be a Tory poster, the badge of breathless arrival, in the window. I came to feel it was time I took part in the life of the country I lived in; I went round to the local Labour Party office. The place was deserted, except for a middle-aged lady in a tweed suit.

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"Yes," she asked sharply. "What is it?"

I asked if there was any work I could do.

"Do you know my son?" she asked. "Do you know him *personally*?"

Her son was the candidate. "No," I said.

"Then why do you want to work for us?"

"I'm a Labour supporter," I said, feeling foolish.

"I see. Well, I really don't know...." She looked around, flustered, and finally picked up a pile of pamphlets. "I guess there'd be no harm in your putting these through letter-boxes."

EVENTUALLY, I graduated from pub to private party, from beer to gin, and I resentfully realised that I was a colourful lad. My background was exotic. Stuck for anything better to say, I could always lapse into anecdotes about my working-class childhood in the Canadian ghetto. I had been raised to consider poverty shameful. My father would have slapped my face if I'd said to him, "We're poor, Paw," and my mother had always corrected me when I said "yeah." I got a clap on the ear if I ate with my elbows on the table. I never peed or shit, but made numbers one and two discreetly. Now nothing made me more interesting to those who had had "all the advantages" than stories of my under-privileged past.

I think one of the difficulties—certainly the largest responsibility—in writing about the poor is to set it down so that it is truthful and doesn't deny the colour and yet is not merely an entertainment for the rich.

THE FRESHNESS has gone.

I've been living in London on and off for eight years now; it's almost my home. As such, I have mixed feelings about the place. Sometimes I like it and other times I long to leave. For if the London I know today is no longer the Big Ben, Bulldog Drummond, and anti-Zionist fox hunters of my childhood dreams, neither is it the cultural fountainhead I sought as a young man.

After all are we, who went through such considerable talents as Odets, Dreiser, Mencken, and Meyer Levin so many years ago, really expected to accept Braine, Wesker, Logue, and the rest of the bunch as new, or even comparable, styles of architecture?

I come from a continent justly accused, I think, of having confused vitality with art, but in England today it would seem to be a new rule. Joan Littlewood is a case in point. To begin with, there was the *shmaltzy*, romantic notion that a working-class district would support a theatre that truly reflected the conditions of its own life. One, to my way of looking the theatre never did reflect these conditions truthfully, and two, to make the long trip out to Stratford East was to see all your Hampstead, Swiss Cottage, and even Chelsea friends. Most of the young working-class boys I did see at the Theatre Royal came, it seemed to me, in exactly the same spirit as I used to go to the theatre when I was a boy, that is, to see some "hot stuff." Miss Littlewood—shrewdly, I think—did not disappoint. Only in England where, until recently, it was unusual to have plays about working-class people could Miss Littlewood have been accounted to either see freshly or be truly of the Left. Only in London where, it appears, the best critics have had merely a literary experience of the working-class, and the very appearance of a plumber on stage makes them either hysterically loving or embarrassed or plain stupid, could the quality of Miss Littlewood's vision not have been exposed for what it was: insulting.

What I saw at the Theatre Royal was plenty of vitality as well as the most boorish, reactionary attitudes remembered from my childhood. By this token, to present an artist on stage is to reveal an outlandish queer (the interior decorator in *Fings Ain't Wot They Used t'Be*); the poor are warm, funny, and hate the middle-class; and, turning a West End cliché on its head, the panty straps of all the girls of Kensington Gore melt at the thought of a worker's hot hand. Well, most of the poor I ever knew, far from hating the middle-class, were bitterly determined to arrive at that station. And to play on the fantasy of workers being hornier, and more sexually able, than the middle-class is only one short cheap cut above the idea of the Negro as the noble savage. I do not know Frank Norman's world first-hand, but I suspect his version of it is no truer, say, than Damon Runyon's New York. Miss Littlewood's Stratford East Theatre was not a breakthrough, but a throwback to old (and, I had hoped, discredited) prejudice. Brendan Behan rose above it.

Occasionally it seems to me that having been raised in one insular community wherein, say, eating non-kosher food made you a rebel, I have carelessly gravitated to another parochial society wherein thumbing your nose at the Queen is considered to be bold and important.

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The Achievement of Edith Wharton

By Irving Howe

"JUSTICE TO EDITH WHARTON"—this was the title, as also the motivating plea, of an essay the distinguished American critic Edmund Wilson wrote soon after Mrs. Wharton's death in 1937. Years have passed; a modest quantity of critical writing about her work has appeared; she still commands the respect of a certain number of readers, just as some, though not enough, of her books are still in print. But if one judges by the treatment she receives in our standard American literary histories, the attention given her in the U.S. universities, the influence she exerts upon present-day writers, the feelings serious literary people are likely to have about their faded memories of her novels—then justice has not yet come to Edith Wharton. And this seems particularly true if one believes her to be a writer of wit, force and maturity, not the peer of Hawthorne, Melville, and James, but several strides ahead of many 20th-century novelists who have received far more praise than she has. The amount of first-rate criticism devoted to Mrs. Wharton's novels is small, but what matters is that the critical issues posed by her work should again be raised, so that she may take her rightful place as a living figure in our literary world.

In writing the following I have chosen not to compose still another formal essay, but instead to present a few critical notes that will isolate the problems faced by Mrs. Wharton's critics. I have borrowed from and where it seemed necessary, quarrelled with readers and critics, all in the conviction that Mrs. Wharton, if not a great writer, is a genuinely distinguished one.

IRVING HOWE *is the well-known American critic who edits* Dissent *Magazine in New York and whose study* "Politics and the Novel" *was published in London by Stevens last year.*

IT IS DIFFICULT to imagine a study of Mrs. Wharton's apprentice fiction in which sooner or later the word "clever" failed to appear. I quote a few characteristic sentences from her early stories:

> The most fascinating female is apt to be encumbered with luggage and scruples.
>
> Her body had been privileged to outstrip her mind, and the two . . . were destined to travel through an eternity of girlishness.
>
> His marriage had been a failure, but he had preserved toward his wife the exact fidelity of act that is sometimes supposed to excuse any divagation of feelings; so that, for years, the tie between them had consisted mainly in his abstaining from making love to other women.

Such writing yields pleasure of a kind, but in the context of Mrs. Wharton's early stories it often seems wilful and strained. One senses too quickly the effort behind the cleverness, the claw behind the glove. Dealing with personal relationships among the leisured and cultivated classes, these stories are usually brittle and contrived, reflections of the conflict in Mrs. Wharton between a worldliness that has not yet been raised to a style and a moralism that has not yet broken past the rationalistic and conventional.

The early stories hardly prepare one for the work to come. For with *The House of Mirth* (1905), a full-scale portrait of a lovely young woman trapped between her crass ambitions and her disabling refinements of sensibility, Mrs. Wharton composed one of the few American novels that approaches the finality of the tragic. The book is close in philosophic temper to European naturalism, though constructed with an eye toward "well-made" effects that are quite distant from the passion for accumulating evidence that we associate with the naturalistic novel. At its best Mrs. Wharton's style is terse, caustic and epigrammatic, a prose of aggressive commentary and severe control. At points of emotional stress, however, she succumbs to a fault that is to mar all her novels except *The*

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Age of Innocence: she employs an overcharged rhetoric to impose upon her story complexities of meaning it cannot support and intensities of feeling it does not need. If not her most finished work, *The House of Mirth* is Mrs. Wharton's most powerful one, the novel in which she dramatises, with a fullness and freedom she would never again command, her sense of the pervasiveness of waste in human affairs and the tyranny that circumstance can exert over human will and desire.

Technically, Mrs. Wharton was not an audacious writer. She felt little sympathy with the experiments that were being undertaken during her lifetime by the great European and American novelists. In reading her books one is always aware that for Mrs. Wharton the novel is essentially a fixed form, a closely-designed if somewhat heavy container of narrative, the presence of which we are never invited to forget. For unlike such impressionist writers as Conrad and Faulkner, she does not seek for that illusion of transparency which might tempt a reader to suppose he is "in" the world of the novel. She wishes her audience always to be aware of her firm, guiding hand, to regard it as a force of assurance and control. In the several senses of the term, she is a *formal* writer.

Mrs. Wharton composed the kind of novel in which the plot stands out in its own right, like a clear and visible line of intention; in which the characters are taken to be rationally apprehensible, coherent figures to be portrayed in outer conduct rather than dissolved into a stream of psychology; and in which the narrative point-of-view is quickly established and limited, even if most of the time it comes through the austere tones of Mrs. Wharton's own voice. Her locale and subject-matter are usually American, but her view of the possibilities and limitations of the novel as a form makes her seem closer to such Europeans as Flaubert than Americans like Melville and Twain.

She is a writer of limited scope. The historic span of her novels is narrow, being usually confined to those late nineteenth-century realignments of power and status that comprise a high moment in the biography of the American bourgeoisie. The social range is also narrow, dealing usually with clashes among segments of the rich or with personal relationships as these have been defined, or distorted, by the conventions of a fixed society. Mrs. Wharton had no gift for the large and "open" narrative forms, those sprawling prose epics which in modern fiction have been employed to depict large areas of national experience. Nor, despite an intense awareness of the pressure of impulse in human life, does she care to encounter the murk and puzzle of the unconscious. She respects it, she fears it, she would as soon keep it at a distance. The arena of her imagination is the forefront of social life, where manners reveal moral stress or bias, and accepted forms of conduct may break under the weight of personal desire. "Civilisation and its discontents": the phrase from Freud could stand as an epigraph for her books. She writes as a convinced rationalist, but in her best work as a rationalist who knows how desperately besieged and vulnerable human reason is.

WITHIN THESE TRADITIONAL limits, and despite her coolness to modernist innovations, Mrs. Wharton was a restless writer, forever seeking new variations of tone and theme, and in her several important novels after *The House of Mirth* rarely troubling to repeat a success. In *The Reef* (1912) she composed a subtle though tenuous drama of personal relations, Jamesian in manner and diction, which deals largely with the price and advantage of moral scruple. In *The Custom of the Country* (1913) she turned to—I think it fair to say, she was largely the innovator of—a tough-spirited, fierce and abrasive satire of the barbaric philistinism she felt to be settling upon American society and the source of which she was inclined to locate, not with complete accuracy, in the new raw towns of the mid-West. Endless numbers of American novels would later be written on this theme, and Sinclair Lewis would commonly be mentioned as a writer particularly indebted to *The Custom of the Country*; but the truth is that no American novelist of our time, with the single exception of Nathanael West, has been so ruthless, so bitingly cold as Mrs. Wharton in assaulting the vulgarities and failures of our society. Her considerable gifts for caricature—what Edmund Wilson calls her "method of doing crude and harsh people with a draftsmanship crude and hard"—reached their fruition in *The Custom of the Country*, a novel that is hard to endure because it provides no consoling reconciliations and has therefore never been properly valued or even sufficiently read. And finally in the list of her superior novels there is *The Age of Innocence* (1920), a suavely ironic evocation of New York in the 1870s, blending Mrs. Wharton's nostalgia for the world from which she came with her criticism of its genteel timidities and evasions. Simply as a piece of writing *The Age of Innocence* is Mrs. Wharton's masterpiece, for it is difficult to think of many American novels written in a prose so polished and supple.

On occasion Mrs. Wharton was also a master of the shorter forms of prose fiction. A fine selection could be made from her short stories,

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and there are three short novels or novelettes—*Ethan Frome* (1911), *Summer* (1917) and *The Bunner Sisters* (1916)—which are of permanent interest. *Ethan Frome*, a severe depiction of gratuitous human suffering in a New England village, is a work meant to shock and depress; it has often been criticised, wrong-headedly, for being so successfully the *tour de force* Mrs. Wharton meant it to be, that is, for leaving us with a sense of admiration for the visible rigour of its mechanics and a sense of pain because of its total assault upon our emotions. *Summer*, a more complex and thoughtful piece of writing, is also set in rural New England, displaying a close knowledge of locale and character which would surprise those who suppose Mrs. Wharton merely to be the chronicler of the New York rich. And *The Bunner Sisters*, an account of the sufferings of two poor women in New York, is not only a masterpiece of compressed realism but a notable example of Mrs. Wharton's ability to release through her fiction a disciplined compassion that is far more impressive than the rhetoric of protest cultivated by many liberal and radical writers. One or two other novelettes by Mrs. Wharton, such as the melodramatic *The Old Maid*, also have a certain interest, for this was a form in which her fondness for economy of effects—a sweeping narrative line, a brisk prose, a rapid disposition of theme and figures—served her well.

The remaining novels? A few are dull and earnest failures, like *The Fruit of the Tree*, and too many others are barely superior to ladies'-magazine fiction, like *The Glimpses of the Moon*. In the novels written during the last fifteen years of her life, Mrs. Wharton's intellectual conservatism hardened into an embittered and querulous disdain for modern life; she no longer really knew what was happening in America; and she lost what had once been her main gift, the accurate location of the target she wished to destroy. But the failures do not matter.

The Heiress of Henry James?

ONE REASON justice has not yet come to Edith Wharton is the widespread assumption that she is primarily a disciple of Henry James, a gifted disciple, to be sure, but not nearly so gifted as the master. Now it is true that if you come to Mrs. Wharton's work with the expectation of finding replicas of the Jamesian novel, you will probably be disappointed; but then the expectation itself is a mistake. The claim that Henry James exerted a major influence upon Mrs. Wharton's fiction, repeated with maddening regularity by American literary historians, testifies in general to the power of laziness over the human mind and in particular to the reluctance of scholars to suppose that anything can spring directly from the art of a writer without also having some clearly specifiable source in an earlier writer.

The literary relationship between James and Mrs. Wharton is too complex to be fully examined here, but I should like to make a few assertions and dispute with a few of the critics. I wish to contend that Mrs. Wharton is not primarily the disciple of James; that James's influence upon her work has either been overstated or misunderstood; and that, within certain obvious limits, she is an original writer.

In one large and pleasant way Mrs. Wharton did regard herself as permanently indebted to Henry James. For her, as for so many later writers, he loomed as a model of artistic conscience and selflessness; his example made their calling seem a sacred one, his devotion to craft made everything else seem trivial. James persuaded her that the composition of a novel should not be a mere outpouring, but a craft to be studied and mastered; he was, as she said in tribute, "about the only novelist who had formulated his ideas about his art." In this respect, then, James was her "inspiration"—which is something rather different from an influence.

There is some evidence of a direct literary influence. A number of James's early novels left their mark upon that side of Mrs. Wharton's work which is concerned with the comedy of social manners. To say this, however, is to indicate a serious qualification: for if James began as a novelist of manners he soon became something else as well, and while Mrs. Wharton was skilful at observing manners and in most of her books more dependent than James upon the use of such observation, it is finally for the strength of her personal vision and the incisiveness of her mind that we should value her work. Perhaps one could say that it was the lesser James who influenced the lesser Mrs. Wharton.

In her valuable essay Q. D. Leavis cites Mrs. Wharton's remark that James "belonged irrevocably to the old America out of which I also came," and that he was "essentially a novelist of manners, and the manners he was qualified by nature and situation to observe were those of the little vanishing group of people among whom he had grown up." Such statements form part of Mrs. Leavis's ground for calling Edith Wharton "the heiress of Henry James," but in taking those statements at face value she is, I think, being led somewhat astray.

Mrs. Wharton's description of James's novels is clearly inadequate, for it transforms him into a writer excessively like herself. His dependence

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on the manners of "the little vanishing group of people among whom he had grown up" was never very great and, as his art matured, was left almost entirely behind. And while a figure of "the old America," James came from a milieu quite different from the one in which Mrs. Wharton was raised and upon which she drew so heavily in her fiction. Though a New Yorker by birth and occasional residence, James had his closest ties of intellect and temperament with the New England of philosophical idealism, both as it came down to him in its own right and as it was recast in the speculations of his father, Henry James Sr. Now it is precisely this element of American thought to which the mind of Mrs. Wharton was closed: both to her literary profit, since she escaped its vapidity, and her literary loss, since a major lack in her writing is any trace of that urge to transcendence, that glow of the vision of the possible, which lights up even the darkest of James's novels.

The intellectual backgrounds of the two writers are quite different, and that is one reason Mrs. Wharton could not respond favourably to James's later novels. The whole Emersonian tradition, so important a formative element in James's sensibility and so pervasive in his later books, was alien to her. E. K. Brown has noted this difference in more personal terms:

> Edith Wharton both in her life and her work seemed to have missed happiness. Something tense and thin and a little sharp marked both. . . . Beneath all the tensions of James, there was a place where life was sweet and warm; and despite the nervous precisions of his style . . . there was something large and rich about his work which is absent from that of Mrs. Wharton.

The truth is, I would maintain, that in Mrs. Wharton's most important novels it is hard to detect any *specific* Jamesian influence. Perhaps it can be found in her conception of the novel as a form, her wish to write with plan and economy; perhaps in the style of *The Custom of the Country*, which may owe something to the cold brilliance of James's prose in *The Bostonians*. But Mrs. Wharton's novelettes are in setting, theme and characterisation quite alien to James, while each of her three best novels—*The House of Mirth, The Custom of the Country*, and *The Age of Innocence*—is a work notably different from either the early or late James. The somewhat naturalistic method of *The House of Mirth* and Mrs. Wharton's preoccupation with Lily Bart as victim of her social milieu; the caustic satire of *The Custom of the Country*, and Mrs. Wharton's impatience with its feeble hero as an agent of traditional values; the modulated style of *The Age of Innocence* and Mrs. Wharton's complex involvement with the world of her birth—all this seems her own. Her characteristic style is sharper, clearer, more aggressive and less metaphorical than James's in all but a few of his novels. Her narrative line is usually more direct than his. And her sense of life is more despondent, less open to the idea or even possibility of redemption.

If Mrs. Wharton was the heiress of Henry James, it did not take her long to start living off her own literary capital.

A World and Its Changes

MRS. WHARTON'S best novels portray the life of "old New York" during the latter third of the nineteenth century. Economically and socially, this world was dominated by an established wealthy class consisting of the sons and grandsons of energetic provincial merchants. In the 1870s and 1880s this class did not yet feel seriously threatened by the competition and clamour of the *nouveaux riches*; it had gained enough wealth to care about leisure, and enough leisure to think of setting itself up as a modest aristocracy. The phrase "modest aristocracy" may seem a contradiction in terms, but it should serve to suggest the difficulty of building an enclave of social precedence in the kind of fluid bourgeois society America was then becoming or had, indeed, already become.

Quite free from any disturbing intensities of belief or aspirations toward grandeur of style, this class was strict in its decorum and narrow in its conventions. With tepid steadfastness it devoted itself to good manners, good English, good form. And it cared about culture too, culture as a static and finished quantity, something one had to possess but did not have to live by. Its one great passion was to be left alone, unchallenged and untroubled by the motions of history; and this of course was the one privilege history could not allow. For as the nation became industrialised, waves of immigrants descended upon New York, and new financial empires were established in the alien cities of the mid-West as well as in Wall Street itself, this provincial ruling class was doomed to suffer both assault and assimilation by newer, more vigorous and less cultivated segments of the American bourgeoisie.

In his charming memoir, *Portrait of Edith Wharton*, Percy Lubbock has left a description of "old New York" which blends irony and affection in a manner somewhat like Mrs. Wharton's own:

> Her New York . . . has there the appearance of a well-rounded polity, as compact within its circuit as an old walled township, *la cité antique*, before the days of spreading suburbs and liberties

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> without the gates: such was the comfortable self-containment of its life.... [It was] a society conscious of itself, aware of its order, sufficient for its needs, beyond any to be seen today, or perhaps in its own day either. It was in no way large enough to be unwieldy or out of hand. It had its choice traditions, not old enough to have loosened or diverged; its organised forms, too plain to be ignored; its customary law, too distinct and categorical to be evaded. I have heard that Edith's mother, a high authority on the subject, would count the names of all the families, in due order of degree, who composed the world to which her daughter was born; and there her world stopped short, it was implied, and no mistake about it.

In "old New York" no one soared and no one was supposed, visibly, to sink. Leisure ruled. Husbands rarely went to their offices "downtown," and there were long midday lunches and solemn entertainments in the evening. Good conversation, though of a not too taxing kind, was felt to be desirable. Taste and form were the reigning gods, not the less tyrannical for their apparent mildness of administration. As Mrs. Wharton remarked with gentle sarcasm in *The Age of Innocence*, it was a world composed of people "who dreaded scandal more than disease, who placed decency above courage, and who considered that nothing was more ill-bred than 'scenes,' except the behaviour of those who gave rise to them." In the same novel she wrote: "What was or was not 'the thing' played a part as important in Newland Archer's New York as the inscrutable totem terrors that had ruled the destinies of his forefathers thousands of years ago." And above all, "old New York" was a world that had entered its decline. What was happening in the years of Mrs. Wharton's youth, as Louis Auchincloss has remarked, was "the assault upon an old and conservative group by the multitudes enriched, and fabulously enriched, by the business expansion of the preceding decades." Mrs. Wharton kept returning to this theme, half in the cool spirit of the anthropologist studying the death of a tribe, half with the nostalgia of a survivor mourning the loss of vanished graces.

Toward the world in which she grew up Mrs. Wharton retained a mixture of feelings that anticipates those of later American writers toward their immigrant childhood and youth in a new New York. It was too fatally *her* world, beyond choice or escape, and it would serve her as lifelong memory, lifelong subject, perhaps lifelong trauma. She loved "old New York" with that mixture of grieving affection and protective impatience Faulkner would later feel toward Mississippi and Saul Bellow toward the Jewish neighbourhoods of Chicago. Yet it also left her dissatisfied, on edge, unfulfilled. Her work, as Edmund Wilson has remarked, "was the desperate product of a pressure of [personal] maladjustments.... At her strongest and most characteristic, she is a brilliant example of the writer who relieves an emotional strain by denouncing his generation." For she yearned for a way of life that might bring greater intellectual risks and yield greater emotional rewards than her family and friends could imagine, and only after a time did she find it in her dedication to writing. Just as Faulkner's attitudes toward his home country have kept shifting from one ambiguity to another, so Mrs. Wharton combined toward her home city feelings of both harsh rejection and haughty defence. There are moments, especially in *The House of Mirth*, when she is utterly without mercy toward "old New York": she sees it as a place of betrayal, failure, and impotence. In her old age, when she came to write her autobiography, she was mellower—though perhaps the word should really be, harder—in spirit.

> It used to seem to me [she wrote] that the group in which I grew up was like an empty vessel into which no new wine would ever again be poured. Now I see that one of its uses lay in preserving a few drops of an old vintage too rare to be savoured by a youthful palate....

For a novelist to be so profoundly involved with a known and measured society offers many advantages. Mrs. Wharton wrote about her segment of America with an authority few of our novelists could surpass, for she was one of the two or three among them who knew, fully and from the inside, what the life of the rich in this country is really like. Henry James had used that life as an occasion for fables of freedom and circumstance in his later books; F. Scott Fitzgerald, an interloper in the world of wealth, was to collect brilliant guesses and fragments of envious insight; John O'Hara has felt his way along the provincial outposts of the America that made its money late and fast. But no American writer has known quite so deeply as Mrs. Wharton what it means, both as privilege and burden, to grow up in a family of the established rich: a family where there was enough money and had been money long enough for talk about it to seem vulgar, and where conspicuous effort to make more of it seemed still more vulgar. While a final critical estimate of her novels can hardly rest on such considerations alone, one reason for continuing to read *The House of Mirth*, *The Custom of the Country*, and *The Age of Innocence* is the shrewdness with which Mrs. Wharton, through an expert scrutiny of manners, is able to discriminate

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among the gradations of power and status in the world of the rich. To read these books is to discover how the novel of manners can register both the surface of social life and the inner vibrations of spirit that surface reveals, suppresses, and distorts.

THERE WERE OTHER advantages in being so close to her materials. As with Faulkner, the subject seems to have chosen the writer, not the writer the subject; everything came to her with the pressure and inexorability of a felt memory; each return to the locale of her youth raised the possibility of a new essay at self-discovery. And in books like *The House of Mirth* and *The Age of Innocence* she could work on the assumption, so valuable to a writer who prizes economy of structure, that moral values can be tested in a novel by dramatising the relationships between fixed social groups and mobile characters. In the friction thus engendered, moral values come to be seen not as abstract categories imposed upon human experience but as problems, elements in the effort of men to cope with conflicting desires and obligations. At every point in *The House of Mirth*, the history of Lily Bart is defined by her journey from one social group to another, a journey both she and her friends regard as a fall but which she, after great confusion and pain, comes to see may have positive consequences. Because Mrs. Wharton is so completely in control of her material, the meanings of the book emerge through a series of contrasts between a fixed scale of social place and an evolving measure of moral value.

But as she herself knew quite well, there was little in Mrs. Wharton's world that could provide her with a subject large in social scope and visibly tragic in its implications. Had "old New York" gone down in blind and bitter resistance to the *nouveaux riches*, that might have been a subject appropriate to moral or social tragedy; but since there was far less conflict than fusion between the old money and the new, she had little alternative to the varieties of comedy that dominate her books. Only once in her novels did she achieve a tragic resonance, and that was in *The House of Mirth* where Lily Bart is shown as the victim of a world that had made possible her loveliness and inevitable her limitations. Even here we must reduce the traditional notion of the tragic to the pathetic on one side and the bleak on the other, if the term is to be used with approximate relevance. In discussing this novel Mrs. Wharton would show a complete awareness of her problem. How, she asked herself, "could a society of irresponsible pleasure-seekers be said to have, on the 'old woes of the world,' any deeper bearing than the people composing such a society could guess?" And she answered:

> A frivolous society can acquire dramatic significance only through what its frivolity destroys. Its tragic implication lies in its power of debasing people and ideas.

Toward the end of her career Mrs. Wharton found it more and more difficult to employ her material with the success that marks her work between 1905 and 1920. Her later novels are shoddy and sometimes mean-spirited in the hauteur with which she dismisses younger generations beyond the reach of her understanding or sympathy. These novels bristle with her impatience before the mysteries of a world she could not enter, the world of 20th-century America, and are notable for a truculence of temper, a hardening of the moral arteries. I would offer the speculation that Mrs. Wharton, whose intelligence should never be underestimated, was aware that the ground on which she took her moral stand was dissolving beneath her. At best the world of her youth had been an aristocracy of surface ("In that simple society," she would recall, "there was an almost pagan worship of physical beauty"), but she had always wanted it to be something better, something beautiful and truly distinguished. She had wanted to look upon it as potentially an aristocracy of value, and throughout most of her life she struggled with this desire and her recognition that it was an impossible, even unreasonable desire. But when she recognised this, she still wondered to what extent the style and decorum of "old New York" had at least made possible some of the aspirations she had cherished since childhood. Having a thoroughly earth-bound mind, she sought for tangible embodiments, in social groups or communities, of the values to which she clung—for she could not be content with the fabulous imaginings Henry James spun in his later novels. She turned, at times with open savagery and at other times with a feeling as close to wistfulness as she could tolerate, to the world of her birth, hoping to find there some token of security by which to satisfy the needs of her imagination. In the inevitable disappointment that followed, Mrs. Wharton, though extremely conservative in her opinions, proved to be the American novelist least merciful in her treatment of the rich. She kept harassing them, nagging at them in a language they could not, with the best will in the world, understand; and then she would become glacial in her contempt, almost too willing to slash away at their mediocrity because she did not know anyone else to turn toward or against.

AT THE END she was alone. If the incongruity between desire and realisation is a recurrent

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motif in her writing about personal relationships, it is an incongruity she also observed in her dealings with the public world. There were always available to her, once she settled in France, a number of personal friends, men and women of high if somewhat forbidding culture. But what emerges from a scrutiny of her work as a whole is that Mrs. Wharton, like so many of those younger deracinated novelists who both interested and disturbed her, was a solitary, clinging to values for which she could find no place, and holding fast, with tight-lipped stoicism, to the nerve of her pride. She was a writer haunted by what she disliked, haunted by the demons of modernism as they encircled her both in life and literature. She would have nothing to do with them, yet in her most important books they kept reappearing, both as agents of moral dissolution and as possibilities of fresh life that needed sternly to be kept in check.

A Personal Vision

THE TEXTURE of Mrs. Wharton's novels is dark. Like so many writers whose education occurred during the latter decades of the 19th century, she felt that the universe—which for her is virtually to say, organised society—was profoundly inhospitable to human need and desire. The malaise which troubled so many intelligent people during her lifetime, the feeling that they were living in an age when energies had run down, meanings collapsed, and the flow of organic life had been replaced by the sterile and mechanical, is quite as acute in her novels as in those of Hardy and Gissing. Like them, she felt that somehow the world had hardened and turned cold, and she could find no vantage point from which to establish a protective distance from it. This condition is somewhat different from the strain of melancholy that runs through American literature, surely different from the metaphysical desperation that overcame Herman Melville in his later years or the misanthropy that beset Mark Twain. What Mrs. Wharton felt was more distinctly "European" in quality, more related to that rationalist conservatism which is a perennial motif in French intellectual life and manifests itself as a confirmed scepticism about the possibilities of human relationships.

In Mrs. Wharton's vision of things—and we can only speculate on the extent to which her personal unhappiness contributed to it—human beings seem always to prove inadequate, always to fail each other, always to be the victims of an innate disharmony between love and response, need and capacity. Men especially have a hard time of it in Mrs. Wharton's novels. In their notorious vanity and faithlessness, they seldom "come through"; they fail Mrs. Wharton's heroines less from bad faith than weak imagination, a laziness of spirit that keeps them from a true grasp of suffering; and in a number of her novels one finds a suppressed feminine bitterness, a profound impatience with the claims of the ruling sex. This feminist resentment seems, in turn, only an instance of what Mrs. Wharton felt to be a more radical and galling inequity at the heart of the human scheme. The inability of human beings to achieve self-sufficiency drives them to seek relationships with other people, and these relationships necessarily compromise their freedom by subjecting them to the pain of a desire either too great or too small. Things, in Mrs. Wharton's world, do not work out. In one of her books she speaks of "the sense of mortality," and of "its loneliness, the way it must be borne without help." I am convinced she meant by this more than the prospect of death. What "must be borne without help" is the inexorable disarrangement of everything we seek through intelligence and will to arrange.

Mrs. Wharton's general hostility toward "modern" ideas must have predisposed her against Freudian psychology, yet one is repeatedly struck by the fact that at least in regard to the *possibilities* of the human enterprise there is an underlying closeness of scepticism between her assumptions and Freud's theories. Mrs. Wharton had a highly developed, perhaps overdeveloped, sense of the power of everything in organised social existence which checks our desires. Like Freud, she believed that we must endure an irremediable conflict between nature and culture, and while she had at least as healthy a respect as he did for the uses of sublimation, she also knew that the human capacity for putting up with substitute gratifications is limited. From this impasse—what Philip Rieff has called, in discussing Freud, "the painful snare of contradiction in which nature and culture, individual and society, are forever fixed"—she could see no easy way out.

A GOOD MANY of Mrs. Wharton's critics have assumed that she was simply a defender of harsh social conventions against all those who, from romantic energy or mere hunger for meaning in life, rebel against the fixed patterns of their world. But this is not quite true for many of her books, and in regard to some of them not true at all. What is true is that most of her plots focus upon a clash between a stable society and a sensitive person who half belongs to and half rebels against it. At the end he must surrender to the social taboos he had momentarily challenged or wished to challenge, for he either has not been able to summon the resources of cour-

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age through which to act out his rebellion, or he has discovered that the punitive power of society is greater than he had supposed, or he has learned that the conventions he had assumed to be lifeless still retain a certain wisdom. Yet much of Mrs. Wharton's work contains a somewhat chill and detached sympathy for those very rebels in whose crushing she seems to connive. Her sense of the world is hardly such as to persuade her of its goodness; it is merely such as to persuade her of its force.

Mrs. Wharton understands how large is the price, how endless the nagging pain, that must be paid for a personal assertion against the familiar ways of the world, and she believes, simply, that most of us lack the strength to pay. Yet she has no respect for blind acceptance, and time after time expresses her distaste for "sterile pain" and "the vanity of self-sacrifice." It is hard to imagine another writer in American literature for whom society, despite its attractions of surface and order, figures so thoroughly as a prison of the human soul. And there, she seems to say, there it is: the doors locked, the bars firm. "Life," she wrote in *The Fruit of the Tree*, "is not a matter of abstract principles, but a succession of pitiful compromises with fate, of concessions to old traditions, of beliefs, old tragedies, old failures." And this sense of fatality has, in her best work, a certain minor magnificence, what might be called the magnificence of the bleak.

In a final reckoning, of course, Mrs. Wharton's vision of life has its severe limitations. She knew only too well how experience can grind men into hopelessness, how it can leave them persuaded that the need for choice contains within itself the seeds of tragedy and the impossibility of choice the sources of pain. Everything that reveals the power of the conditioned, everything that shreds our aspirations, she brought to full novelistic life. Where she failed was in giving imaginative embodiment to the human will seeking to resist defeat or move beyond it. She lacked James's ultimate serenity. She lacked his gift for summoning in images of conduct the purity of children and the selflessness of girls. She lacked the vocabulary of happiness.

But whatever Mrs. Wharton could see, she looked at with absolute courage. She believed that what the heart desires brings with it a price and often an exorbitant price. Americans are not trained to accept this view of the human situation, and there is nothing to recommend it except the fact that it contains at least a fraction of the truth. How well, with what sardonic pleasure, Mrs. Wharton would have responded to the lines of W. H. Auden:

> *Every farthing of the cost*
> *All the bitter stars foretell*
> *Shall be paid.*

Song

Far wind, old sea-wind, you
That wake me from my dream,
Your soft airs waft to me
Memories of some sea
That I was moving through
Forever in my dream.
I wake, yet all things seem
So dream-dark, falsely true—
Dark is the night, the dream
Dark I was moving through.
Oh, what is false, what true?
Oh, that the soft airs blew
A breath from some far sea
To wake me from this dream.

John Hall Wheelock

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NOTES & TOPICS

Bunuel's "*Viridiana*"

"SHE HATH the green-sickness." We are given the clue by the unfortunate girl's name, lifted from some obscure saint of an early century. But is it only the stupidly pious novice who suffers so much violence to so little effect that suffers from spiritual chlorosis? Buñuel is at all levels a symbolist. And Viridiana is the symbol he has chosen to represent the stagnant culture of contemporary Spain, which he revisited on Franco's invitation, after some twenty years of exile. His stay was bound to be short; no film that was truly Buñuel's could be acceptable to the Spanish censorship. Only an obtuse hope to gain credit in the eyes of the liberal world could have prompted the dictatorship to invite two such incorruptibles as Picasso and Buñuel to work within the borders of a country where artistic freedom is non-existent.

Buñuel's reaction to Spain is something of a snap judgment. So was the poet Jorge Guillén's sequence *Potencia de Pérez*—for Pérez read Franco—written under similar circumstances. "The dominion of the common [in the Spanish sense of *cursi* or pretentious] man" was Guillén's verdict, for Pérez is the most common of Spanish names. "The realm of green-sickness" was Buñuel's.

Viridiana is green-sick; sex has turned sweet within her, and yet her sickly smile of benignity only excites lust or derision. Her ideal is no doubt the obtuse head-mistress untouchability of the middle-aged nun who comes to call her back to the convent after her rape, or near-rape, by her perverted uncle. He too suffers from green-sickness in the somewhat different form of sex-in-the-head. The derelict *quinta* or manor-house in which he lives with his housekeeper, his housekeeper's preternaturally knowing bastard daughter, and an old man-servant stands for Spain once more. His dead bride's finery, drawers full of unused table-linen and cupboards full of glasses, but no electricity and no crops in the fields: this is the old Spain that Buñuel re-discovered after twenty years in Mexico, where feudalism is dead. And nastiest symbol of all, introduced casually but lovingly dwelt on, is a penknife in the shape of a cross. Jesus the Knife!—a blasphemous jab at the Catholic hierarchy.

So far we have examined only some of the minus symbols, and there are many more. The skipping-rope, for instance, with which the child plays, with which the uncle hangs himself, and which is afterwards used by one of the beggars to tie up his trousers. The troop of beggars which Viridiana benignantly invites to live in her part of the inherited manor represent the plus sign of a virile Spanish tradition now in decay. The fat blind one is the same old rogue that bashed young Lazarillo's head against the stone bull of Salamanca in the earliest novel of all, *Lazarillo de Tormes*. We have met them time and again in Spanish writing and in Spanish painting. The mock gentility of one, the battered hero's features of another who recalls Don Quixote crowned with the barber's basin, the female dwarf out of Velazquez' *Las Meninas*, the pair of harridans from Goya's *Witches' Sabbath*: grouped around the white table-cloth and the dusty goblets in a parody of the Last Supper, they represent a past in picturesque decay, the Spain of the tourists. Though still strong enough to mock and rape their benefactress, they are now irredeemable. When Viridiana's bastard cousin comes to take over his share of the *quinta*, he buys a dog from a peasant who is working it to death by making it trot underneath his cart. But no sooner is this dog released than another passes in the opposite direction underneath another peasant's cart. "To rescue one dog, or a troop of beggars however picturesque and characterful, leads nowhere. Action must be on another scale," is Buñuel's apparent comment.

Viridiana's bastard cousin—God stands up for bastards—represents the other plus sign in Buñuel's film. He is the common man, though not in the Pérez sense; and work, water and electricity are the unpoetic forces which he brings to the faded idyll of the derelict *quinta*. He arrives with his girl, the lowest common denominator of all the neatly dressed heads that cross the Puerta del Sol when the offices close. The country bores her, and she goes back to Madrid, leaving him to superintend his workmen. The crude contrast between the angelus-hour prayer in the orchard, to which Viridiana summons her beggar troop with her most vacuous smile, and the gushing of water and mixing of concrete in the yard nearby raises the question of Buñuel's first intention. Does he imply that work is always better than prayer? I do not think the film sets out to do more than reflect the Spain that he found on his return: a country in which the poor are incited to pray rather than demand the minimum of human rights.

The plus sign of the new man contains a far lower charge of significance than the thieving, roistering, fornicating beggars, who are finally driven from the *quinta*, only to descend, we must suppose, on some other pious benefactress.

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The new man has so little strength of his own that the pious Viridiana gets under his skin. He has to rescue her from a second rape, and he has somehow to bring her down to earth. The new Spain of the football crowds and the quick-lunch counters is far from having brought the old Spain of the Easter processions down into the world of European reality. The most that he can do, indeed, at the end of the film, is to make her play cards with him. One is left to conclude that the habit will grow on her. "Patience and shuffle the cards" is a proverb quoted more than once in *Don Quixote*. Buñuel ends with no Soviet apostrophe to the new age of the pylon and the tractor. The cherry-orchard has not yet been cut down, and all the poetry of his film derives from the old world in decay.

Buñuel's method, whatever his subject, is essentially poetic; sequences are used as metaphors, and the overall content of the poem cannot be expressed in a prose paraphrase. "*¡Qué asco! Pero, qué asco!*" exclaimed a young woman, who might have been the sister of the new man's mistress, as she came out of the London cinema in front of me. "It's rotten, it's disgusting!" is perhaps Buñuel's final comment too on the Spain that he re-visited and from which he quickly escaped. He makes it stink for us like a room shut up for centuries, in which beauty moulders. Water and electricity will at least cleanse and light it. But Buñuel's poetry is made from the fusty bric-a-brac, not from the new air and brightness. All his films have drawn on the dark symbolism of the Freudian unconscious, from which his contemporaries the Surrealists also took their imagery. But just as surrealistic fantasy was overtaken by reality in the shattered suburbs of Madrid under bombardment or in London under the blitz, so Buñuel's darkest imaginings find their counterpart in the stagnant psychology of present-day Spain under the dictatorship of army, clerics, and plutocrats.

J. M. Cohen

That Ten Per Cent

The Folly of "Our Bomb" — By G. F. Hudson

The Government's *Statement on Defence, 1962*, which was presented to Parliament in February, informs us in passing that the nation's effort to achieve a nuclear capability consumes "only about 10 per cent of our defence resources." The word "only" is worthy of note, for we are clearly expected to be agreeably surprised that the bill for nuclear armaments does not absorb an even higher proportion of what we pay for national defence. But it means in any case a lot of money. The same document declares that the Defence Budget for 1962–63 will be £1,721 million or 7 per cent of the Gross National Product, so that ten per cent of this will be not less than £170 million. The question whether we gain any advantage by this heavy expenditure when so vast a nuclear capability is in the possession of our American ally is one that should surely be of concern to the people of this country, yet it evokes comparatively little public controversy, because lay opinion is convinced that it is either a technical matter which can be discussed only by professionals or a moral issue on which any objection to our "having the bomb" must apply equally to our allies. It is, nevertheless, possible to criticise the policy of maintaining an independent national nuclear capability without either getting involved in the arcana of General Staff planning or joining the C.N.D. in a march to Aldermaston.

It is an open secret that Britain maintains her independent nuclear capability, not in accord with, but against the wishes of, her principal ally. The Americans would greatly prefer us to leave it to them to provide the strategic nuclear component of NATO and set ourselves the task of contributing to an increased strength of conventional military forces in Europe, which, as Mr. John Strachey so ably pointed out in the April issue of Encounter, is now the most essential need to the end of preserving a balance of power in the world and avoiding a situation in which nuclear weapons might have to be used to redress a decisive military inferiority. If the American Government does not press us harder in this matter, it is not because it is convinced by any arguments from London in support of current British defence policy, but because of a reluctance to interfere in a question within Britain's sovereign jurisdiction and risk an explosion of anti-American feeling by so doing. If we choose to spend ten per cent of our Defence Budget in a way that Washington thinks undesirable, that is our affair. The British *Statement on Defence*, however, claims that we

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are not only doing it to please ourselves, but are conferring a great benefit on NATO by our policy. "Our contribution to the Western strategic deterrent," declares the Government's manifesto,

> remains significant. It is by itself enough to make a potential aggressor fear that our retaliation would inflict destruction beyond any level which he would be prepared to tolerate. Moreover, it adds considerably to the flexibility and dispersal of the total nuclear forces available to the West and thus to their retaliatory power.

This passage of the *Statement on Defence* very skilfully combines the basic idea of national defence in isolation with a graceful lip-service to the general strategy of the NATO alliance. To say that British strategic nuclear power will be enough "by itself" to deter any aggressor means that we intend to be strong enough to defend ourselves against the Soviet bloc even if America does nothing to help us. The talk about adding to the nuclear power of the United States—with regard to which Eisenhower's remark that "Enough is plenty" still holds good—merely serves the purpose of toning down what would otherwise be a rather crude affirmation of British intention not to rely on the protection of the American alliance.

THE VIEW that in the nuclear age it is inherently impossible to expect assistance from any other nation against nuclear attack is one that is seldom openly stated in this country, but has been very vigorously argued in France. The argument is that since to engage in full-scale nuclear war involves the prospect of such immense losses, no nation, when it came to the point, would take the plunge unless it were itself directly attacked; it would not incur the devastations of a nuclear exchange for the sake of an ally, whatever might be its treaty obligations. It follows from this assumption that only a nation with an effective nuclear capability of its own can in the last resort have a credible deterrent against nuclear attack or blackmail by the threat of it. Closely connected with this belief is the idea of nuclear capability as a status symbol, the mark of a Great Power, which should command in world affairs a respect and deference not accorded to nations which lack it. It would be very difficult in trying to write a history of the British policy of achieving a separate nuclear capability to distinguish between fear that American aid might not be forthcoming in an emergency and the desire on political grounds to be independent of it. There remains in Britain, widespread among the people and strongest of all in the political outlook of the Conservative Party, a nostalgia for the good old days of "splendid isolation," when Britannia ruled the waves and there was no need to enter into entangling alliances or depend for national security on help from foreigners. There was, therefore, a few years ago a more than willing audience for the comforting doctrine propounded by Mr. Sandys, which promised the British nation an independent power sufficient to deter any aggressor through the creation of a strategic air force able to deliver heavy nuclear weapons on enemy territory.

The claim of the *Statement on Defence* that British nuclear power is "by itself enough to make a potential aggressor fear that our retaliation would inflict destruction beyond any level which he would be prepared to tolerate" must, however, be examined with due regard to the words "by itself," which imply a situation in which American intervention would not be assumed as likely either by ourselves or the hypothetical enemy. The official case is that expenditure of ten per cent of our Defence Budget gives us such a strategic nuclear capability that we can deter attack, or, if attacked, inflict overwhelming retaliatory damage, without American aid. This claim has to be considered in relation to the area of the United Kingdom and its proximity to Soviet bases in Europe, to the delivery system employed—consisting of V-bombers based on a limited number of airfields—and to the possible forms of attack with which a nuclear war might begin.

STRATEGIC NUCLEAR WEAPONS are of unprecedented destructive force, but because of the high speed of delivery systems—whether supersonic bombers or ballistic missiles—they are also highly vulnerable to other nuclear weapons if the enemy knows exactly where they are. The most powerful weapon in the world is useless if it is destroyed before it can be sent on its mission. Hence the importance of the first strike in a nuclear war. The aim of a first strike must be to destroy as many as possible of the bombers and missiles of the enemy before they can leave the ground. If he has been alerted, however, and if the warning of enemy approach is sufficient—and these are the big *ifs*—he should be able to get most of them off the ground before his bases are wrecked by the explosions of the first strike bombs. Alternatively, he may have nuclear forces in places where the enemy does not know that they are, or in movement, particularly at sea in Polaris submarines, and the more weapons he has thus unlocated or in movement the better his chances of surviving an enemy first strike and inflicting full retaliatory damage; the greater also the deterrent effect of his nuclear capability, for the potential aggressor, knowing that his forces are dispersed or

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mobile, cannot hope to wipe them out by sudden attack, as he may if they are all in a small number of fixed bases. Even against fixed bases the first strike may not be decisive if there is full alert and adequate warning. But if these conditions are not fulfilled, it could achieve almost total destruction of bombers or missiles on the ground.

A nuclear first strike can theoretically take place in either of two political situations. The one is that of a mounting crisis or a serious clash of conventional forces which escalates through exchanges of tactical nuclear weapons into full-scale nuclear war. In such a case the nuclear combatant forces on both sides will be at maximum alert, and even though the side which makes the first strike may still gain an advantage, no real surprise can be achieved. The other situation is that in which there has been political tension over a period of time, but no sense of crisis sufficent to induce full alert in a nation whose posture is a purely defensive one; complete surprise may then be achieved by a sudden attack.

IN THIS COUNTRY, however, it is the fashion to pooh-pooh the notion of surprise attack. In the words of Mr. Michael Howard in his article on *"Bombing and the Bomb"* in the April issue of ENCOUNTER, it is considered to belong "to war-gaming and not to political life." The British Government is apparently quite sure that it would know in good time if there was likely to be a nuclear attack and would have its own strategic force in a state of maximum alert. Mr. Watkinson has stated in the House of Commons that in an emergency the V-bombers would be able to take off from their airfields at four minutes' notice, which is supposed to be guaranteed when the early-warning radar system is in full operation. But for how long could such a state of tip-toe preparedness be maintained? What if Bomber Command did not know there was an emergency or if there were minutes of doubt how to interpret the first signals of oncoming missiles? Can we really feel confident that all the V-bombers would be in the air rather than on the ground if an enemy were to launch an attack with ballistic missiles, not only without declaration of war, but even without a crisis which the Foreign Office would consider to have passed beyond the stage of diplomatic negotiations?

SINCE THERE has not yet been any war between nuclear powers, it is very hard for anyone to imagine what might happen in such unprecedented circumstances. But those who are inclined to discount the possibility of surprise attack ought to give serious consideration to what happened just over twenty years ago, when there were as yet no nuclear weapons, but already naval and air forces capable of swift movement and sudden blows.

The Pacific War was launched by Japan in December, 1941, after more than four months of acute international tension following the Japanese move into southern Indo-China in July and the imposition of economic embargoes on Japan by Britain, Holland and the United States. All American and British forces in the Pacific had been alerted to the danger of war and were supposed to be fully prepared for it. Yet the Japanese achieved surprise with their initial attacks at Pearl Harbour, in the Philippines, and in Malaya. At Pearl Harbour the American battleships did not have their torpedo nets out, there were no fighter aircraft ready to take off, and the anti-aircraft guns on the airfields could not be fired until the gunners had gone to draw ammunition from stores. At Clark Field in the Philippines, the planned Japanese attack was delayed by fog, and the news of what had happened at Pearl Harbour reached Manila before it took place; nevertheless the American bombers were caught closely parked on the ground and most of them destroyed.

In Malaya, British air reconnaissance had revealed a great fleet of Japanese warships and troop transports heading into the Gulf of Siam thirty-six hours before the first landings, but the British Commander-in-Chief hesitated until it was too late to carry out Operation Matador—the plan for forestalling the Japanese at the key position of Singora across the Siamese border which he had himself prepared and which he had been authorised by the War Cabinet to carry out if in his judgment an invasion was imminent. Of his failure to act the official *History of the Second World War* merely records that

> bearing in mind the policy of avoiding war with Japan if possible—a policy which had been reaffirmed by the Chiefs of Staff as recently as the 29th November—and the situation in the United States where the diplomatic talks were still going on, Sir Robert decided that he would not be justified in ordering 'Matador' on this information.

His indecision threw away whatever chance there was of averting what Churchill called "the greatest disaster to British arms which our history records."

THESE EPISODES of recent history are here recalled not to exploit the advantage of hindsight at the expense of commanders on whose shoul-

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ders rested a terrific burden of responsibility at a time of uncertainty between peace and war, but in order to put the question whether in the light of such experience we can expect the response of our defence authorities to a sudden attack with ballistic missiles to be as immediate, decisive, and unconfused as it would need to be. If the British Commander-in-Chief in Malaya could not make up his mind in thirty hours what significance was to be attached to the approach of a swarm of Japanese ships, can we feel certain that an officer on duty in the nuclear age would interpret correctly in three minutes phenomena on a radar screen which might be either ballistic missiles or effects of the *aurora borealis*?

It may be said that the experience of 1941 has itself taught a lesson and that no such unpreparedness is likely to recur. But in so far as the lesson has been learnt, it has been in America rather than here. In America there was a Congressional enquiry on Pearl Harbour and the whole story was told in public; in Britain there has never been any public enquiry into the Malayan disaster and there has been a sort of tacit agreement to forget all about it. As a result the Americans have a lively sense of the possibility of "an atomic Pearl Harbour," whereas in Britain there has been no lasting damage to the pious belief that the responsible authorities always think of everything and are prepared for all eventualities.

IF WE LACK this faith, we are driven to the conclusion that it is very dangerous to have a strategic nuclear capability embodied in a force of V-bombers which could be so easily destroyed on the ground by a surprise attack. Their vulnerability could indeed be greatly reduced if we were able to provide a large number of supplementary airfields for dispersal and transfers, but this would require a substantial increase in the Defence Budget as well as additional man-power which is not available; even if we had the resources, the island of Britain is too small for it, for, apart from mountainous areas unsuitable for airfields, it is hard to find land not required for agriculture or housing. There is also the alternative of sending the nuclear forces to sea and making them completely mobile in ships or submarines, and at first sight this may seem the obvious solution for a nation which is heir to the tradition of Barham and Nelson. But the Government does not propose anything of the kind, for the very good reason that it would cost too much. The V-bombers are the cheapest as well as the most vulnerable form of "the deterrent."

The Americans in developing their strategic nuclear capability are not subject to the same limitations as those which constrain us. With a vast continental area between two oceans, they have a very great advantage as regards warning of attack, whether from Soviet land bases or from the sea. Their greater financial resources enable them to build many more airfields for dispersal, and their great spaces of unoccupied land, including extensive deserts, give them room for as many as they can make. Their wealth also enables them to invest in a fleet of Polaris submarines which are not subject to time-on-target attack. Their abundant oil supplies enable them to keep a part of their strategic air force perpetually airborne, at least when there is some degree of international tension.

Britain cannot afford to do any of these things. The ten per cent of the Defence Budget which goes into nuclear capability is not enough to provide a strategic nuclear force that is passably invulnerable to surprise attack. One solution to the problem would of course be a great increase in the Defence Budget; the other, and the only reasonable one, would be to give up the idea of independent nuclear power, entrust America with the nuclear protection of NATO, and put the ten per cent thus saved into the conventional forces on which we have fallen far short of our original NATO commitment.

WE CANNOT in this age defend ourselves alone; there can be no return to the days of splendid isolation. We are a member of a community of allied nations, and we must rely on them even as they rely on us for our collective security. A rational division of labour requires that we leave the nuclear deterrent to those who are best qualified by geographical position and economic resources to provide it. If we can count on American nuclear protection, our own strategic nuclear force is superfluous; if we cannot, it is too vulnerable to sudden attack to give us any real security. It may be hard to give up an arm of defence on which so much money and effort have already been expended, but to-day, as Mr. Strachey has convincingly argued, "the interests both of the West and of peace move in the direction of strengthening the conventional forces."

This is where the British defence effort is needed, not in pursuit of the mirage of independent nuclear power.

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Rapallo: Myth and Reality

By F. R. Allemann

FORTY YEARS AGO (on April 16, 1922) in a small seaside resort on the Gulf of Genoa, a treaty was concluded which—unlike most of the diplomatic instruments of that already remote era—is still capable of rousing strong emotions: the Treaty of Rapallo. For the first time since the end of World War I, the representatives of the Weimar Republic and the Russian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic (which later developed into the Soviet Union) signed a formal agreement which caused a sensation at the time and, like a mythical force, has never ceased to haunt men's minds. Even to-day, forty years later, the words "Rapallo policy" still arouse secret hopes and uncanny fears; at this very moment, indeed, the catchword appears to have acquired a renewed topicality, attracting some, depressing others.

Hardly any other event in diplomatic history is capable, at such a distance of time, of arousing such contradictory feelings. For some, "Rapallo" represents an event as catastrophic as the fall of man, a disastrous aberration, an evil deed which was bound to bring forth evil, if not a downright pact with the Devil himself. Yet for others the document would appear in retrospect to have been a diplomatic masterpiece, the result of great constructive statesmanship, an example of *Realpolitik* which might well serve the politicians of to-day as a model and guide (and would do so if these men had not got themselves entangled in "doctrinaire" conceptions).

In the negative and hostile attitude to the Treaty it is still possible to sense the shock which it produced at the time in the Western world, the depth of which may be measured by the intensity of the condemnation which it still arouses. On the other hand, it is possible to feel, even now, in the positive enthusiasm for the Treaty the pride felt at the time in the achievement of a brilliant coup and also the conviction that the coup was going to influence the whole future of mankind.

F. R. ALLEMANN *is a leading Swiss commentator on German affairs who is the co-editor of "Der Monat" in Berlin.*

On both sides there was and is the conviction that Rapallo was more than the answer to the challenge of a particular passing moment, that it was rather the fulfilment of a constant possibility in German-Soviet relations which may become topical again at any time—the possibility of German-Soviet cooperation beyond the differences of social systems and political attitudes.

THERE IS IN FACT nothing in the treaty itself to justify either the bitterness of its enemies or the enthusiasm of its champions. When the effect it had is measured against its actual content, the misunderstanding must seem quite grotesque. On closer examination and viewed from the distance of forty years, the document which agitated so many minds, sowed so many suspicions, and aroused so many hopes turns out to have been quite unsensational. Indeed it might be called strikingly harmless. On the surface at least it was merely an attempt to settle the "conflict between Germany and Russia" by mutual agreement. Since the defeat of the *Reich* in World War I had rendered the separate Russo-German Peace of Brest-Litovsk meaningless, and since the Soviet Government had never signed the Treaty of Versailles, it was not surprising that the two powers should have decided to come to an understanding. They achieved it by a mutual renunciation of their claims for war damage and war costs. Germany even went further and waived all claims for compensation for damages by German citizens arising from the Revolution, provided that the Russian Government did not "satisfy similar claims of other States." At the same time it was agreed to resume diplomatic and consular relationships and, finally, the two governments affirmed their desire to meet the economic needs of the other party "with mutual feelings of goodwill"—a deliberately vague formulation of a readiness to cooperate in the economic sphere.

That was all—and there was quite certainly nothing world-shattering about it. Neither of the two powers had made a one-sided or irrevocable political choice. Rapallo did not establish an alliance or a political bloc. Fundamentally, it was a straightforward "normalisation" of the relationship between the German *Reich* and

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the Soviet Republic. Only the financial clauses went any further than that and they too were simply intended to make a clean sweep, by the mutual cancellation of all claims (which were in any case problematical and would have been difficult to fulfil). Since Germany had not the slightest hope of collecting war compensation from the Soviets, whilst, according to the Versailles Treaty, Russia was able to claim German reparations, it was the *Reich* that benefited most from Article 1 (renunciation of claims for war damage and war costs). It made up for this advantage by acknowledging the Soviets' right to expropriate German nationals without compensation. Since the Russians were only able to collect German reparations in agreement with the allied powers (and such agreement was dependent on a Russian acknowledgment of Tsarist pre-war debts), the Western powers and not the Russians would have been the real beneficiaries of any German "reparations" paid to the Soviet Republic; for this, if for no other reason, it was not difficult for the Russians to waive their legal claims on the Germans. They also thereby gained the assurance that Berlin would keep out of any international association which attempted to enforce claims for compensation for foreign capital that had been "socialised" by the Russians. Each of the contracting parties therefore gave to some extent a guarantee that it would not participate in a "united front of creditors" directed against the other State. This in itself shows how advantageous the arrangement was for the two parties. It banished the German nightmare of having to pay the costs of an understanding between the Soviets and the victors of World War I; at the same time it dispersed Soviet fears that victors and vanquished might unite in an imperialistic phalanx against the young and isolated Soviet power which was still rather uncertain of itself.

As one looks back on Rapallo, however, it is impossible to dispute that, leaving all the ulterior motives on one side, the content of the agreement was eminently reasonable. It was certainly more in accord with the realities of the situation than most of the schemes put up by the diplomats and financiers at that time. It is now generally agreed that the demand for reparations, in accordance with the war-time slogan *"le boche payera,"* was not only politically unwise but also economically senseless and disastrous and impeded the recovery of economic life throughout the world. Even in 1922 it must have been clear to any alert observer that the elemental event of the Russian Revolution could no longer be revoked by external pressure.

It was not the actual text of the treaty which caused the "Rapallo shock." "The fact of the signing was more important than the formal content," as has been said by one of the historians of German-Soviet relationships.[1] What excited world opinion was the political pattern traced out by this attempt at a *rapprochement* between Berlin and Moscow: the beginning of co-operation between the Outsiders. The Allied powers had entirely failed to reckon with the possibility that Germany and Russia, who were both excluded from the "family of nations," treated as outcasts and deliberately isolated by the victors, might come together despite all the differences in their social and political organisations. That this event took place on the periphery of the first great post-war international conference to which the two hitherto ostracised powers had, by way of exception, been invited, was regarded as a manifestation of base ingratitude and malevolent cunning, the more so as no one had been prepared for the explosion of this diplomatic bomb.

THE WESTERN POWERS had only themselves to blame for thus being caught entirely unawares. It is a well-known fact that all the efforts of the German delegation in Genoa to make contact with the leading British representatives before the conclusion of the treaty had been in vain. It is also a fact that the German foreign minster, Walter Rathenau, had hesitated for a long time before signing the document. This was not because he had any misgivings about one or other of the clauses but because he was afraid that a sudden coup of this nature might break up the Genoa Conference (his fears turned out to be perfectly justified), and because he saw that it might endanger the chances of at any rate a partial understanding with the victors (though, in view of Poincaré's rigidly hostile attitude, he doubted whether such chances in fact existed at all). Rathenau only yielded reluctantly to the pressure of Chicherin, who claimed that the Soviet negotiations with the Western powers had been far more successful than was actually the case, and who was eagerly supported by the "Eastern politicians" in the German delegation (who, in addition to *Reichskanzler* Wirth, included the later Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Ago von Maltzan). It may well be argued that the undoubted concrete results of the agreement were largely invalidated by the unprecedented psychological effect which the "bomb" caused in the West. Unexceptionable though the treaty

[1] Edward Hallett Carr, *German-Soviet Relations between the two World Wars, 1919–1939*, Oxford, 1952.

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itself may appear to have been, the diplomatic *coup de main* with which it was presented to an angry and astonished world may well be regarded as highly questionable. Be that as it may, it does not alter the fact that a certain measure of German-Soviet co-operation was inherent in the logic of the current international situation. Forgetting all the side issues, it does seem almost inevitable that two isolated powers, which were practically excluded from all international communications, should have tended to seek for a mutual understanding and even to enter into a close union with one another. When a nation has a large number of enemies it naturally tries to make contact with others in a similar position. There is no sense in applying abstract ideological criteria to the politics of a State which is forced to operate under such unusual and oppressive conditions, or to get morally worked up about it; and it would be equally absurd to project the utterly different world pattern of to-day into the past and blame the statesmen of that age for only following "narrow national interests." Since the victors of World War I had neglected to create any common interests with the vanquished, there was nothing for the latter to do but exploit to the utmost the modest opportunities of independent action which still remained open to them.

Let us be quite frank about it—Rapallo was the receipt for Versailles: the spirit that ruled in the Versailles Treaty (the spirit of unrestrained national egoism, with no commitment to any international ideas) was bound to produce the "spirit of Rapallo." One cannot defend Versailles and also condemn Rapallo. The fruit plucked on the Gulf of Genoa had grown on the tree which the victors planted three years before. This is not an excuse for the treaty but it is a judgment on the policy which made a German-Soviet *rapprochement* unavoidable.

By thus recalling the circumstances surrounding the Rapallo treaty, we should be saved from the temptation of distilling from this event and from the widespread collaboration between the Weimar Republic and the Soviet Union which followed, a supra-temporal principle of German diplomacy, to be applied in all circumstances and in every situation. The positive Rapallo myth is just as contrary to historical fact as the negative one, and infinitely more dangerous in the present situation. The agreements of 1922 were quite definitely not a *Sündenfall* which it was necessary subsequently to disown. Still less, however, were they a model to be followed at will in the future. They were rather the product of a unique political situation which, as far as it is humanly possible to judge, will never recur and which has meanwhile become part of history. It is quite possible to believe that they accorded with this unique situation, that they were realistic and to that extent justifiable and right from the standpoint of the parties concerned. But this has no bearing whatsoever on the question whether a new Rapallo would be equally justifiable or even feasible in the radically different world of to-day, that is, within a completely different set of international relationships.

On the contrary: when one recalls what was really behind the German-Soviet *rapprochement* of 40 years ago, what caused the two parties to make this move, what they hoped or were entitled to hope from it, and then compares the picture with the situation as it is in 1962, the irrelevance of any model derived from the situation of that time to the current problems of German politics leaps to the eye at once.

The decisive factor is the radical displacement of political power and influence which has taken place since 1922. At that period the *Reich* and the Soviet Republic, albeit for different reasons, were not only in a similar state of international isolation; their acting in unison was also facilitated by the fact that they were completely equal partners. Potentially they were both still great powers, but for the time being both were weakened and strictly limited in their freedom of manoeuvre. Germany and Russia were both suffering from the consequences of an exhausting war and a heavy defeat which had thrown them, for the moment, into a position of inferiority. The advantageous geographical situation of the Soviet Republic, in the "heartland of the Euro-Asiatic land mass," its incomparably greater area and larger population, were offset by its technical backwardness and by the devastations caused by the Revolution and civil war and by the German partner's incomparably greater industrial power. Furthermore, the *cordon sanitaire* of young national states which the victors had drawn right across Central Europe from the Baltic to the Black Sea separated the two states from one another and spared them the problems which arise from immediate proximity. Both states were equally interested in preventing the political consolidation of this mid-European Zone. Both were pursuing, in particular towards Poland, a "revisionist" policy (or what the Soviets now call "revanchist"). This too brought Berlin and Moscow closer together, though it was obvious that they would not need to be afraid of one another only so long as the situation created in Eastern Europe by Versailles and Trianon persisted—a situation which they were jointly endeavouring to undermine. As soon as the barrier between them was removed, their friend-

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ship would also threaten to fall to pieces, since they would then meet as rivals in the intervening zone. (This inevitably happened in the new phase of the German-Russian entente at the time of the Ribbentrop-Molotov pact.)

Their relationship was therefore by no means free of mistrust (and even mutually justified mistrust). There was altogether a piquantly paradoxical element in the friendship which began in Rapallo. The *Reichsregierung* knew perfectly well that the Kremlin was planning to carry the "proletarian revolution" into Germany and secretly promoting with all the means at its disposal the German Communists' plans for a *putsch*. For its part the Soviet Government had no illusions about the ulterior motives which were behind the flirtation of the German middle classes with Communist Russia: it was perfectly aware that the supreme concern of the Germans was to secure for themselves a modicum of independence in foreign policy. It also realised that, with increasing stabilisation, German capitalism was bound to succumb to almost irresistible pressure from the West. This in fact happened only a few years later with the Locarno pact and the entry of the German *Reich* into the League of Nations, though Stresemann took the precaution of offsetting these westward moves by concluding the German-Soviet "Berlin Treaty" of 1926.

FOR THESE REASONS, if for no others, it was impossible for the relationships which had been created in Rapallo and which were subsequently intensified by trade agreements and secret military co-operation between the *Reichswehr* and the Red Army, ever to be crystallised in the policy of a real bloc. Even at the time of the Versailles Treaty, Germany's economic and political connections with the West were too close for it to be able to enter into an intimate association with the Russians. Thus the friendship of Rapallo was always a very partial one, hemmed in by various reservations, and, despite the secret military agreements, it really boiled down more to a mutual neutralisation (with an admittedly, for a time, very benevolent interpretation of neutrality) than even a potential alliance. Each of the parties knew that the long-term interests and intentions of the other ran counter to his own. There was no reason why this should necessarily prevent them travelling for some part of the way together, and so long as their respective forces were more or less equally balanced they were able to afford a temporary association.

TO-DAY NONE of these presuppositions exists any longer. On the contrary, not merely the long-term but also the intermediate interests of the Rapallo partners are so utterly antithetical that an understanding between them is well-nigh inconceivable. Since the Soviet Union has used its victory in World War II to advance its military perimeter to the very gates of Lübeck, into the Harz mountains and as far as the Werra, and also to incorporate a third of Germany politically and socially into its own domain, there is simply no longer any basis for a Rapallo type of agreement. If in the early 'twenties the Versailles policy of the Western powers drove the *Reich* almost irresistibly (at any rate, for a time and with certain reservations) into the arms of Russia, Soviet policy since 1945 has led even more inevitably to the Federal Republic being driven into the arms of the Western powers. As long as Moscow insists on the status quo, this situation is unalterable, because it is inherent in the logic of the distribution of power in Europe even more than was the Rapallo treaty.

Now it may be asked—and this seems to be at the bottom of the recently revived talk about "Rapallo"—whether their possession of the Eastern Zone of Germany as a mortgage does not offer the Soviets an opportunity of drawing the Germans as a whole on to their side. If one day they were to be weary of the everlasting crises in the Russian Zone of Germany and the pressure on Berlin seemed too risky, might it not occur to them to take the opposite direction and by making concessions at the expense of the "German Democratic Republic" entice the Federal Republic to leave the Atlantic Alliance since they are unable to compel her to do so? Is it really impossible that some government in Bonn might be tempted by such an offer to change course and turn Eastwards?

It may of course be objected that the argument is entirely speculative since there is at present not the slightest indication that a *reversement* of this kind is even under consideration in Moscow. The much disputed memorandum of 27 December can certainly not be construed in this sense; however unwonted its tone of studious wooing and however interesting some of the hints in the text might seem, it did not contain the remotest suggestion that Moscow might be envisaging the surrender of her Zone. On the contrary, the whole document was a skilful, though unsubstantial, attempt to render a German-Russian reconciliation on the basis of the status quo palatable to the recipient. The memorandum was concerned not with offering a deal on the basis of common interests, but with sweetening the prospect of capitulation to a superior power.

It is, however, still an open, albeit for the time being purely hypothetical question, what the reaction would be if Moscow were one day

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to decide on tangible and more concrete offers. The hypothesis may be thought extremely improbable—and in my own opinion it quite definitely is so—on practical grounds alone (since Moscow cannot "write off' the Eastern Zone of Germany without seriously endangering the whole cohesion of the Eastern bloc) and, above all, on ideological grounds. But this does not absolve us from envisaging such an eventuality.

In so doing we must try to visualize the nature of a possible Russo-German partnership under present conditions. In Rapallo the powers that met were of equal standing. In the meantime, however, the then Soviet Republic which territorially had been cast back almost to its eighteenth century condition, has become a world power, whereas the German *Reich* is now reduced, geographically, to the Federal Republic and, politically, to the condition of a third-class power. Under these circumstances a "new Rapallo" would be an agreement between extremely unequal parties.

Even in 1939 it was still possible for Germany and the Soviet Union to meet as equals (in the Ribbentrop-Molotov pact) and divide up central Europe (*Zwischeneuropa*) between themselves. But to-day (and tomorrow and the day after tomorrow) any co-operation between them would be determined from the outset by Russia's obvious and unchangeable preponderance.

There may well be something attractive for the Soviets in the idea that the Federal Republic might one day turn its back on the Western camp and join with Moscow in a *tête-à-tête*. But what on earth would ever induce Bonn—no matter who happened to be in power—to meddle in such a dangerous enterprise? The prospect of German reunification? Ten years ago most of the Germans shrank even from the adventure (likewise hypothetical) of making an international agreement on the neutralisation of Germany as a whole the subject of negotiations! Their reasons for resisting such a move were doubtless good and compelling ones (though that is an arguable question). But compared with a "new Rapallo" which, under present conditions, would mean Germany's leaning for support on Russia's superior forces, an acceptance of the Stalin proposals of March, 1952, would have been a perfectly harmless venture. (Whether the proposals were meant to be taken seriously or were merely a tactical manoeuvre is immaterial in the present context.) At that time the idea of keeping a united Germany out of all one-sided military commitments was still based on the conception of a European system of security and of a Four-Power guarantee. However problematical such a project may have appeared, it cannot be denied that, compared with an isolated German-Soviet arrangement which would be attainable only by a wanton breach of the Western alliance, it was bound to seem infinitely more "realistic." No German politician in his right mind will ever be prepared to play the part of junior partner (and suicide candidate) in a *societas leonina* with Moscow.

Of course there are people—and not only Dr. Dehler and Ambassador Kroll—who regard an agreement with Moscow as quite feasible, even at the price of heavy sacrifices. But the important thing is that, unlike the open and secret adherents of the German *Friedensunion*, they would not dream of undertaking such an operation on their own responsibility and behind the Allies' back. An arrangement reached without the consent of the Western powers could be anything at all, but it could certainly not be another Rapallo. And there is really no sense, from the German or from the Western point of view, in burdening one's thoughts about all this with historical parallels which are not real parallels at all, or to summon up ghosts which are resting peacefully in their graves.

There is, however, one quite different and very topical question: whether, under what conditions, on what basis and with what ultimate purpose a bilateral German-Soviet conversation or even, maybe, a German "initiative" (*nach Osten*) might be possible and meaningful, what might be hoped from it in the most favourable circumstances, and what dangers might lurk therein. One cannot, however, discuss *this* question rationally, without first clearing away the rubble of a past which has nothing whatever to do with the problems, opportunities, and dangers of the present and which can only distort one's vision of the future.

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London Commentary

The Liberal Revival

By David Marquand

LIBERALISM *never has been nor ever can be anything but a diversified crowd. . . . Essentially it is the party of criticism, the 'Anti' party. It is a system of hostilities and objections that somehow achieves at times an elusive common soul. It is a gathering together of all the smaller interests which find themselves at a disadvantage against the big established classes, the leasehold tenant as against the landowner, the retail tradesman as against the merchant and moneylender, the Nonconformist as against the Churchman, the small employer as against the demoralising hospitable publican, the man without introductions and broad connections against the man who has these things. . . . It has no more essential reason for loving the Collectivist state than the Conservatives; the small dealer is doomed to absorption in that just as much as the large owner; but it resorts to the state against its antagonists as in the middle ages common men pitted themselves against the barons by siding with the king. The Liberal Party is the party against 'class privilege' because it represents no class advantages, but it is also the party that is on the whole most set against Collective control because it represents no established responsibility. It is constructive only so far as its antagonism to the great owner is more powerful than its jealousy of the state. It organises only because organisation is forced upon it by the organisation of its adversaries. It lapses in and out of alliance with Labour as it sways between hostility to wealth and hostility to public expenditure. . . ."*

That passage might have been written at any time in the last eighty years. In fact, it was taken from H. G. Wells's *"The New Machiavelli,"* published in 1911. It still provides an ideal starting point for a discussion of the collapse of the Liberal Party in the first two decades of this century, and of its partial revival to-day.

In the General Election of 1906, the Liberals obtained 377 seats, a majority of 84 over all other parties combined. In addition there were 53 labour members, of whom 24 had been elected as Liberals, while most of the other 29 had been returned with Liberal support following the electoral pact between Ramsay MacDonald and the Liberal Chief Whip, Herbert Gladstone. Ten years later a Liberal Prime Minister was ousted from power by an intrigue headed by another Liberal. Ten years after that, the Liberals were the third party in the House of Commons and had indisputably lost their place as the main progressive force in British politics to the Labour Party. By 1936 the Liberals had 17 seats in the House of Commons; by 1946, 25; and by 1956, 6. At intervals during the last thirty-five years there have been spasmodic and much-publicised Liberal "revivals." There was a notable one before the election of 1929, when Lloyd George offered to conquer unemployment. There was another in the late 'fifties and yet another is in progress now. So far none of these revivals has produced results remotely commensurate with the hopes, the energies or the promises of the Liberal Party.

IN HIS ENGAGING POST-MORTEM on *The Strange Death of Liberal England*, now re-issued as a paper-back,[1] Mr. George Dangerfield explained at least the beginning of this sad story in two ways. So far as it can be discerned beneath the convoluted mannerisms of his style, his message was that the soul of Liberal England had perished long before 1914. The Liberal Ministers, swept this way and that by every wind that blew, were the ghosts of a heroic past. If the World War had not arrived in time to save them they would have faced a civil

[1] *Constable*. 1936.

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war in Ireland, and perhaps a General Strike on this side of St. George's Channel as well. They were powerless to satisfy the demands of organised labour; they were unable to reconcile the claims of the Southern Irish Nationalists (on whom they depended for their Parliamentary majority) with those of the Ulstermen; most important of all, their ideology—the vague and sentimental creed of the Liberal Party—was no longer capable of voicing the aspirations of the rising generation. The death of Liberal England was, in fact, not strange at all. It was the inevitable result of the failure of the Liberal Party to represent the interests of the working class, and of the failure of Liberalism to inspire a satisfactory answer to the psychological and economic problems of modern society.

This analysis, like much that was written in the nineteen thirties, drew heavily on the determinism implicit in Marx and in Freud. To Dangerfield, the sight of the Liberal Government struggling unsuccessfully with the problems of English society from 1910–14 suggested that its struggles were bound to be unsuccessful; the fact that the Liberal Party did collapse suggested that it was bound to do so. A modern historian would be less cocksure. It seems clear enough that the Liberal Party of *The New Machiavelli*, that motley caravanserai of teetotallers, Nonconformists, small businessmen, lawyers and Radical intellectuals, would have had to undergo substantial changes if it was to maintain its position as the leading progressive party in this country. But it is not clear at all that changes were inevitably ruled out. The real questions to ask are: what changes were necessary? and why were they not made?

As H. G. Wells noticed in the paragraph immediately after the one which I have quoted, the Liberal Party of 1911 was remarkably similar to the American Democratic Party of the same period. No two societies are ever strictly analogous; and American history, like the Kingfish is *sui generis*.[2] Nevertheless, to an acute contemporary observer like Wells, the political situations in the two countries looked alike. Wilson's "New Freedom" was a more inspiring version of contemporary English Liberalism; the strength of the American Socialist Party was superficially not so very far behind that of the British Labour Party; the Taft wing of the Republican Party occupied a position on the American political spectrum not very different from that of the Conservative Party in Britain; and if one wishes to play this game to the end one can even find similarities between the "New Nationalism" of Teddy Roosevelt and the attitudes of the tariff reformers in this country.

YET in the United States the Democrats beat off the Socialist challenge while in Britain the Liberals did not. There are, of course, innumerable explanations: the contrast between the effect of the first World War on the United States and its effect on Britain; the even more dramatic contrast between American prosperity and British stagnation in the 'twenties; the relative weakness of the unions in the United States compared with their relative strength in this country; the fact that American Socialism was essentially an immigrant creed with few roots in native American soil; the ethos of the frontier and the sense of social mobility associated with it compared with the class-consciousness of Britain. But when all is said, it seems to me that the true explanation lies in the difference between Franklin Roosevelt and David Lloyd George.

American Socialism fizzled out intellectually because its clothes were stolen by the New Deal. It got nowhere politically because the American trade unions were absorbed into the "Roosevelt coalition" in a way that the British trade unions were not absorbed into the Liberal Party. The second point is at least as important as the first. Roosevelt's greatest achievement was to assemble behind him an alliance of the out-groups of American society: Southern whites, Northern Negroes, labour unions, liberal intellectuals, and small men resentful of Big Business and Wall Street. The ideology of this alliance was (and is) a curious hodge-podge of Jeffersonian liberalism on the one hand, and a surprisingly vigorous sense of class conflict on the other. In order to maintain the Liberal Party, Lloyd George would have had to assemble a similar alliance in this country.

AS WE KNOW, Lloyd George failed to do this. But there was nothing inevitable in his failure. Before 1914 he had good contacts with the Chairman of the Parliamentary Labour Party, Ramsay MacDonald; and his mind seems to have been moving towards closer links between the Radical wing of the Liberal Party and the Labour Party. Moreover, there were good objective reasons for thinking that closer links were both possible and necessary. If the Liberals needed Labour, Labour needed the Liberals. Most of the Parliamentary Labour Party had been elected with Liberal support; most of the trade unionists *were* Liberals in everything but name. The same applied to the ideologies of the

[2] When Huey Long, the much-maligned champion of the Louisiana rednecks was asked to define his ideology, he replied: "Just call me *sui generis* . . ."

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two parties. MacDonald's Socialism, though unquestionably sincere, was not far removed as far as immediate issues were concerned from the advanced Liberalism of the day. He might have found it impossible to convince the ILP of the need for closer links with the Liberals; but the ILP without the trade unions scarcely mattered. The key to the story was the attitude of the trade unions. If Lloyd George had been able to buy them back for Liberalism, the history of the British Left would probably have followed the American pattern.

This Lloyd George did not do. In his recent lecture on Lloyd George, Mr. A. J. P. Taylor puts the crucial moment in 1917, when Lloyd George humiliated Arthur Henderson and (probably unwittingly) forced his resignation from the coalition Government. It seems to me that there were two crucial moments, not one. The first was in 1914, when MacDonald and the ILP opposed the war, and were joined in their opposition by Radical intellectuals like Ponsonby and Trevelyan. The second was in 1916, when Lloyd George ousted Asquith with the aid of as unpleasing a collection of political assassins as has ever assembled to do a good man down. Like MacDonald after 1931, Lloyd George became the prisoner of the forces that put him in power. The Maurice Debate, the coupon election, and the "hard-faced men" of the 1918 Parliament all followed from that.

BUT THE DETAILS do not matter. The really important points are that the war smashed the chances of the progressive coalition that might have been formed under the aegis of the Liberal Party—and that the pieces were picked up by Ramsay MacDonald and the Labour Party. Whether MacDonald foresaw the significance of his own actions during the war I am not at all sure: probably not, if only because people rarely do. But once again that does not matter. The important point, as Mr. Taylor notes, is that MacDonald usurped Lloyd George's position as the "man of the people"; that he, and not Lloyd George, became the leader of a progressive coalition of Radical intellectuals and trade unionists; and that in spite of his own break with the Labour Party in 1931, his coalition continued to exist as a Labour coalition and not as a Liberal one.

YET THERE were important differences between the Labour coalition which did come into existence and the Liberal coalition which might have done. In the first place, the Labour coalition professed to be Socialist; and although its Socialism was often muddled and usually sentimental, it gave the Labour Party a messianic drive and a sense of purpose which even the most progressive Liberal Party would have lacked. Secondly, and even more important, the Labour coalition was built around the trade unions in a way in which the potential Liberal coalition would not have been. If the Liberal Party had survived, the unions would have had to play an increasingly important part in it, for that would have been the condition of its survival. But in the Labour Party, the unions did not merely play an important part: they controlled it. Middle-class (and working-class) intellectuals who joined the party in the 'twenties and 'thirties often resented the power of the unions. In every conflict, however, it was the side backed by the unions which won. MacDonald, James Maxton, Oswald Mosley, Stafford Cripps, Aneurin Bevan, Michael Foot: the history of the Labour Party is littered with the political corpses of those who tried to lead it in a direction opposed to the unions, and were forced to surrender or leave the party.

Perhaps because of this, there was a third difference, also, between the actual Labour and the potential Liberal coalitions. The very diversity to which Wells objected in *The New Machiavelli* gave the old Liberal Party a kind of strength which the Labour Party has never managed to emulate. The Edwardian Liberal Party, with all its hypocrisies and confusions of purpose, was a national party in a sense in which the Labour Party has never been. Even in 1945, Labour did not quite equal the Liberals' achievement in 1906. The Socialist creed of the Labour Party has never won as broad-based an allegiance as that won by the sentimental populism of the Liberal Party before 1914. Britain, in other words, still lacks a complete equivalent of the "Roosevelt coalition." The most important questions for the future of British politics are whether such a coalition can be created; and, if so, whether it can best be created around the Labour Party or around the apparently revived Liberals.

THERE IS NO GUARANTEE, of course, that it will come into existence at all. It seems to me perfectly conceivable that we shall be governed, for the foreseeable future, by an alliance of Bow Groupers and increasingly "enlightened" Big Businessmen, making increasingly infrequent genuflections to the memory of *noblesse oblige*. In that case, the only solution for unreconstructed democrats would be to emigrate —except, unfortunately, that there is nowhere to emigrate to. However, I cannot quite believe in this nightmare. In the end, even benevolent despotisms crumble, because even the benevolent cannot indefinitely resist the corruptions of power. In Britain, moreover, the greatest

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strength of the Conservative Party is the inveterate snobbery and deference of the British people —and these are likely to be eroded away by the educational progress which Big Business itself is beginning to demand. Indeed, I believe that certain aspects of the Liberal revival, together with certain aspects of the New Left and the CND—reverse sides, in a way, of the same coin—suggest that among people under 30 even the half-hearted educational revolution which we have already experienced is beginning to produce precisely this result.

The ingredients of a successful progressive coalition exist; the difficulty lies in bringing them together. If the Liberals can do this, then indeed they will deserve to be taken seriously. It must be admitted that they have two great advantages: their own inexperience, and the present state of the Labour Party. For most of the last ten years, the Labour Party has behaved in a fashion perfectly calculated to destroy its chances of power. The arthritic rigidity of the Old Right has alienated idealists; the empty intransigence of the Old Left has alienated the uncommitted voter; the almost unbelievable personal virulence of both wings of the party has alienated those who dislike the use of character assassination as an instrument of politics. This last point is more important than perhaps it sounds. A Conservative M.P. once told me that his favourite method of whiling away the tedium of the Palace of Westminster was to approach members of the Parliamentary Labour Party, chosen at random; ask them their opinions of fellow-members of the Parliamentary Labour Party, also chosen at random; and wait for the sewers to explode. Trivial personal gossip? Perhaps: but it should be remembered that the last nail in the coffin of the old Liberal Party was hammered in by the personal feuds of its members after the first World War.

In contrast to the Labour Party, the Liberals look enthusiastic, idealistic, and reasonably united. No doubt they are divided on policy; but at least they are able to refer to each other in public without spitting with hatred. At the same time, they have contrived to look more Radical than, at any rate, the leadership of the Labour Party. The substance of what Mr. Grimond says is usually extraordinarily conventional, but the presentation is not. He has mastered the most important technique of all for a Left-wing leader in this country: that of vehement moderation. He, rather than any member of the Labour Party, is to-day the most obvious candidate for the title, "Man of the People." Moreover, the Liberals precisely because of their inexperience and irresponsibility, have been able to adjust themselves faster than the two great parties have done to the change in Britain's world position. They have no glorious, but misleading, memories of the great days of the "Anglo-American alliance"; their eyes are not blinded by the vision of Britain as the inspiration and the hope of humanity in five continents. Most important of all, they have adjusted themselves to the decline in Britain's power without nostalgia. (The leaders of the two great parties frequently give the impression of finding the modern world a distasteful and even an alarming place.) The Liberals seem to find it comfortable, and even attractive. For a popular party, this is clearly one of the most important attributes of all.

IN SPITE of this, two obstacles stand in their way. The first is the instinctive loyalty of the British working class to their own political party. In a recent article in the *Guardian*, Mr. Christopher Driver argued that political parties do not have to be based on class interest, and went on to infer that the Liberal challenge might be more successful than orthodox commentators have suggested. There is obviously a great deal of truth in this. Class interest is not the only basis of political loyalties; if it were C. P. Scott would have become a Conservative, and the *Manchester Guardian* would never have played the magnificent part in English history which it has played. But although class interest need not be the only determinant of political allegiance, it is at this moment one of the most important elements—and so long as politics is concerned at all with the distribution of wealth and power, it is bound to remain as such. It was on this rock that the Liberal Party was smashed; and it is on the same rock that Liberalism still founders. So long as men are men, someone will be called upon to organise the distribution of wealth and power among them; and in any conceivable human society that is what politics is primarily about. The conflict between opposing class interests is not an invention of dirty-minded trade-union agitators. It is a fact of human society; and it has been one of the fundamental axioms of every political theory worth the name since the early nineteenth century. The implicit Liberal conception of society as a collection of individual atoms, each separate atom pondering the problems of the day in altruistic solitude, bears no relation whatever to any society which has actually existed.

But if class conflict lasts, and if the Trade Unions continue to exist, why should either the working-class voter or the trade-union leader transfer his allegiance from Labour to the Liberals? What have they to gain by doing so? In what way are the trade unions likely to have

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more power in the Liberal Party than they already have in the Labour Party? And why should the working-class voter expect the Liberal Party to do more for him than the Labour Party is likely to do? I admit that the old forms of class consciousness are dying out and that by every standard—objective and economic, as well as intuitive and psychological—the working class is shrinking in size. But although it is shrinking, is has by no means disappeared. So long as it continues to exist, it will have to be the main basis of progressive politics in this country, for there is no other basis in sight.

IT IS PERFECTLY true, of course, that political parties do not *need* to be based on class interest. They can be based, for example, on a common political philosophy instead. But the Liberal Party lacks a common political philosophy even more obviously than it lacks a common economic interest. The Liberals are today even more than they were when Wells wrote the passage I have quoted, "the party of criticism, the 'Anti' party," with no coherent vision of society as a whole. By this I do not mean that the Liberal Party has no policy. That is a silly invention of the Conservative Central Office, which does not deserve to be taken seriously. What I do mean is that the individual policies of the Liberal Party, though sometimes sensible enough in isolation, have not sprung from a consistent attitude to man in society.

It is a common delusion of intellectuals to imagine that political parties must be based solely on political theories. It is an even crasser delusion to imagine that political theories have no relevance to practical politics at all. Parties of the Right, it is true, need little in the way of ideas; but parties of the Left disintegrate without them. It is perfectly true, no doubt, that the intellectual content of the ideas that suffice to hold a political party together can be extremely low. In the 19th century, the Liberal Party was held together for decades by nothing more precise than a vague faith in "the People," nonconformity in religion, and "Free Trade"; and as late as 1906, these threadbare beliefs still had enough life in them for the purposes of everyday politics. But in the end the life ebbed out of them, and as it did so the cement holding the Liberal Party together began to crack. There is no real sign that the present-day Liberals have found a new cement to replace it. Mr. Grimond and his followers can generate intense excitement when they denounce the ills of the society around them; but so far, at least, their party is held together solely by what Wells calls "a system of hostilities and objections!" In this country at this moment serious political thinking on the Left is still conducted within a broadly Socialist framework. The Liberal tradition has inspired nothing remotely comparable. Where is the Liberal Crosland or the Liberal Raymond Williams? They do not exist; and they do not exist because Liberal*ism*, as opposed to an assortment of separate Liberal proposals, no longer exists as a coherent political creed.

If the Liberals were already established as the main Left-wing party in the state this might not matter: they could keep going, as other parties have done before them, on sheer inertia. But for the Liberals to rely on inertia in their present position is almost self-contradictory. Their claim to be taken seriously rests on the possibility that they may replace the Labour Party; and that in turn rests on their claim to offer a satisfactory alternative to the Labour Party. But until they can produce a coherent political creed of their own, their ability to replace the Labour Party will depend solely on the weaknesses of the Labour Party, and not on their own positive attractions. In the last resort, the Liberal revival owes its existence to the mistakes made by the Labour Party in the last few years. If Labour can rectify these mistakes, the Liberal revival is unlikely to last.

The Obsessive Object

I WOULD LIKE to draw attention to a curious feature of the present-day French cultural scene: the reign of the object, *l'objet*. As far as I know, this has not yet been commented on as a general phenomenon; no French or English critic has referred to it, except incidentally in connection with literature. But it goes beyond literature, and provides a link between the novel, poetry, philosophy, the fine arts, the theatre and the cinema. Perhaps it is just one of those fashionable crazes, like the use of a catchword, that have no profound significance. Or it may indicate some deep and important development.

The latest sign of it I have noticed is in François Truffaut's amusing film, *Jules et Jim*, now running in London. In one of the incidental episodes, Jim, who has been abroad for some time, comes back to Paris and goes round the cafés to see his pals. One of them is sitting at a bar-counter with a pretty girl, who says nothing but smiles in a Mona Lisa-ish way. She never speaks, explains the pal. She is not stupid, she is hollow, and he adds, giving her a demonstrative little tap: *"C'est la femme-objet!"*

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Now the film is based on a novel by Henri-Pierre Roché, who was born before 1900, and this particular episode is supposed to take place in the 1920s. My guess is that it is not in the original book at all, but has been added by Truffaut as an appropriate joke for the 1960's.

A more striking manifestation is the exhibition, simply entitled *"L'Objet,"* which has been on show at the *Musée des Arts Décoratifs* at the Louvre for the last few months. It consists of everyday objects (or would-be everyday objects)—pieces of furniture, lampstands, stoves, chairs, etc.—designed, and in some cases actually made, by painters and sculptors, at the invitation of the Louvre authorities. These artists are not normally concerned with the production of utilitarian instruments, and it is particularly strange that non-figurative painters, who are not interested in putting objects into their paintings, should have agreed to create objects. Admittedly, these objects are anything but functional, as I shall explain in a moment, but most of them could, at a pinch, be made to serve a purpose, and that was, in fact, one of the preliminary rules of the exhibition.

It was organised by one of the *conservateurs*, M. François Mathey, who also persuaded the writer, Francis Ponge, to compose an introduction to the catalogue. Ponge, now rising seventy, is enjoying a considerable vogue at the moment for the first time in his life, because the younger generation of writers delight in his elaborate descriptions of pebbles, insects, fruit, and other non-human entities. His introduction is a prose-poem, which takes as its title a quotation from Georges Braque: *L'Objet, c'est la poétique.*

Ponge's young admirers also admire Alain Robbe-Grillet, the principal exponent of the "New Novel" and famous for his would-be impersonal descriptions of pieces of string, lamp-posts, cardboard-boxes and severely, indeed mathematically, objectified landscapes.[1] Through Robbe-Grillet, the object came into the cinema in *L'Année Dernière à Marienbad*, in which the characters have the petrified look of statues or figures on a chess-board, and a statue is treated almost as if it were more alive than the characters. The camera also explores the scrolls and twirls of baroque decoration and the geometrical masses of a great castle and a formal garden.

THIS FILM, AND Robbe-Grillet's books, link up with at least three other trends with an obsessional interest in the object:

(1) The director of the film, Alain Resnais, began as a specialist in documentaries, and it is noteworthy that the French, after borrowing the documentary from the English, have, in recent years, given it a much more systematic and intellectual development than our practitioners ever did. Resnais's previous film, *Hiroshima mon Amour*, was, in my view, much more effective as a rather inhuman documentary than as an ideological statement, and it will be remembered that in the opening sequences the naked lovers were treated as a piece of animated statutary. In both films, the physical décor was hard and memorable, the human content rather soft and perishable.

(2) *L'Année Dernière à Marienbad* is often reminiscent of Cocteau, whose characters also moved through a world of ambiguous inanimate presences, which seemed to have more vitality than human beings. In *La Belle et la Bête*, the walls sprouted arms bearing torches; similarly, in *L'Année Dernière à Marienbad*, it is not clear whether the liveried servants in the corridor belong to the world of things or the world of human beings. Cocteau, of course, links up with Surrealism, with its deliberate confusion of the categories of the senses and of the animate and the inanimate, *e.g.*, the watch which flops sloppily over like a fried egg, and the fur-lined cup and saucer.

(3) It would seem from Robbe-Grillet's own admissions, that his objective descriptions derive not only from the cinema and the compelling presence of photographed objects, on which he has expatiated at some length, but also from the Existentialist consciousness of the object as a symbol of alienation, which we find displayed in Sartre's *La Nausée* and Camus's *L'Etranger*. The significant objects in Sartre are a statue in a municipal square, a pebble, a door-knob, a hand, the braces of a café-proprietor and, of course, the famous gnarled trunk of the chestnut-tree around which the hero's meditations finally crystallise. Camus's hero sees his mother's coffin as an object, but the important inanimate realities in *L'Etranger* are sunlight and heat, which are felt as dominant, inhuman presences, that is as diffused objects: they turn the sea, for instance, into a sheet of metal.

IT REQUIRES NO GREAT effort of the imagination to move a step further and see a connection between Surrealism and Existentialism on the one hand and the Theatre of the Absurd on the other. (Robbe-Grillet was, incidentally, one of the first people to show an interest in Eugène Ionesco, although Ionesco does not appear to have returned the compliment in respect of Robbe-Grillet's novels.) Ionesco's plays are full of a sort of phobia of the proliferating object; chairs crowd the stage; a corpse grows daily larger, threatening to stifle the living; fecundity

[1] See the essay on Robbe-Grillet in ENCOUNTER, March, 1962.

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is an embarrassingly abundant production of identical eggs, and individual people turn into indistinguishable rhinoceroses—and the rhinoceros itself, of course, is a sort of object, because of its hard casing and its inorganic forms.[2] In Beckett, too, we see a certain objectivisation; the characters are stark and battered, and they would not have far to go to become like Henry Moore's semi-natural objects in stone, wood or metal. Lucky, in *Waiting for Godot*, is treated as an animal-object; the characters in *Endgame* are inseparable from their dustbins, in which they fit like snails in their shells, and the snail is an almost perfect symbol of the animate-inanimate ambiguity. In *Krapp's Last Tape*, the human identity passes into a metal or plastic band.

Even this does not exhaust the list of manifestations. I was astonished last Christmas when I went, for the first time, to see the productions of Roger Planchon, the young Left-Wing actor-manager who is widely spoken of as a new and vigorous force in the French theatre, to discover what an overwhelming, and indeed exhausting, importance he attaches to the material details of staging. He seems to carry Jean-Louis Barrault's doctrine of *le théâtre total* several degrees further, so that the social thought he presumably wishes to convey gets lost in the décor. In his guying of *The Three Musketeers*, he actually makes Richelieu fry an egg on the stage, but this appears to be less to score a point against Richelieu (as far as I can see, no point is scored) than to have a real egg fried in real time in front of the audience, so that the absurd presence of the object can be driven home.[3] His *Georges Dandin* is full of real hay, food, washing, etc., and is an elaborate transposition of Le Nain's pictures. I kept hoping that a cow would calve in the middle of the stage to make the farm-yard really life-like, and then I suddenly realised that, of course, there were no animals—no hens, dogs, birds, or living animal noises—and that this was why the "realistic" farm-yard was so dead. The carefully dressed and slouching peasants were just dummies, unnecessary objects, cluttering up the action, which goes at such a spanking pace in a conventional, Comédie Française production. In *Edward II*, the décor was a splendid system of coloured blocks in abstract shapes, designed by a well-known artist, and they were slightly modified for each scene, so that I found myself again forgetting the action and wondering what delectable pattern of objects we were going to be treated to next.

THE OBJECT has also found its way into critical parlance. For a long time now, Gaston Bachelard has been preparing the way by writing—although in a fairly traditional manner—about the symbolism of air, fire, and water and the other pre-scientific categories. Continuing a similar line of enquiry, Roland Barthes and Jean-Pierre Richard have produced stimulating studies on the psychological significance of the concrete metaphors used by a number of writers. (Barthes was the first critic to praise Robbe-Grillet, and he praised him precisely for inventing what he, Barthes, called *la littérature objective*, which means both "objective literature" and literature which makes a special use of objects.) Jean-Pierre Richard's big doctorate thesis on *L'Univers Imaginaire de Mallarmé* has just appeared in the last few weeks and, according to the publisher's handout, it promises (my italics):

> ... une psychanalyse des *matières* favorites de Mallarmé: glaces, feux, gazes, écrins, eaux limpides ... On saisira à travers les pages de cet essai l'intention poétique des *objets fétiches* tels qu'éventail, miroir, danseuse, lustre, grotte, diamant, foule ou papillon ...

Actually, Richard includes a good deal more than objects but his preoccupation with them obviously has a connection with the general obsession I have indicated.

THAT THERE is some collective urge here, peculiar to the French in this acute form, seems undeniable. Whether or not it is all reducible to exactly the same phenomenon is less clear. I imagine that the exhibition at the Louvre was partly suggested by the fashionable use of the word *l'objet* in relation to the "New Novel" and partly by the desire to provoke an outburst of creative activity, independent of what the French *avant-garde* contemptuously refers to as *l'art industriel*.

I had supposed, in my innocence, that industrial art—*e.g.*, Swedish glass, Danish furniture, and the sort of *objet* on display at our Haymarket Design Centre—was now of a very fine quality, but I am told that this is not the case. No sensitive Parisian artist, for instance, could possibly buy contemporary furniture; he must go to second-hand shops and markets to look for old or quaint things. The painter, Georges

[2] In the early story, *Le Mur*, and in *Les Séquestrés d'Altona*, Sartre betrays an interest in crabs, which are crustacean objects, as the rhinoceroses are animal objects. In *Le Mur*, he also has flying statues.

[3] Perhaps I am becoming obsessed myself, but I realise, on re-reading this, that the egg is another animal object: a mineral case containing organic matter. At first, it is a clean and beautiful spheroid; when broken, it is ambiguous liquid; frying changes it into a sort of rubbery flesh.

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Mathieu, states very emphatically in a letter included in the catalogue, that this is the first time in French history that there has been no contemporary *style of living* in material things, acceptable to the élite. General de Gaulle does not live in Gaullist furniture, as Napoleon III lived in a Second Empire setting, or Louis Quinze in Louis Quinze. This is no doubt true but, while industrial art may be inadequate, it is difficult to imagine the General living in a setting composed of the objects in the Louvre exhibition. They are, for the most part, feathery, spindly, twisted, oblique, and non-functional. M. Mathey says himself that, to his surprise, they turned out to be mainly baroque. Looking at the photographs with the general theme of the object in mind, I am struck by the resemblance between these created objects and accidental, natural objects, such as flotsam and jetsam, bulbous fruits, stick insects and sea-bed growths. Nothing is firm, simple and neat, as in industrial art. There is frequent, ambiguous hesitation between inanimate and organic forms, and a definite preference for the weathered, damaged, unfinished work. For instance, the ornamental hangings of a four-poster bed are literally rags. This connects up in a way with Ponge; he has not, to my knowledge, published any prose poem entitled *A Dirty Rag*, but having read his *Unfinished Ode to Mud*, I can well imagine him having written one, and I would expect it to be interesting.

On the other hand, the "New Novel" is not spindly, vegetable, and indefinite. It has an almost maniacal precision about it; it describes a deliberately distorted world of objects which, like the universe of Cubist art, is a careful rearrangement of geometry. Yet the loving complexity of its patterns is not without a baroque aspect. *L'Année Dernière à Marienbad* is actually set in a baroque castle; *Dans le Labyrinthe* is labyrinthine; Butor's new book, *Mobiles*, is a pure exercise in structure, and the title, taken from Calder's invention, means of course a sheer object in space, gratuitously existing through its own mere presence.

I think we have to conclude that this passion for objects, whether it derives mainly from Existentialism and Surrealism or comes from some other source, has already developed several modes, none of which, however, establish any firm distinction between humanly created objects and natural objects. Sartre and Ionesco have a poetic hatred of objects, because objects embody the defeat of the intelligence by the opaqueness of creation; Sartre sees them as being ambiguously nauseating, while for Ionesco they are, whether man-made or natural, actively malevolent. Cocteau and other less despairing post-Surrealists mix organic and inorganic to produce a sacred horror, which is not always unpleasant. Robbe-Grillet is a kind of sterilised Existentialist, who establishes control over objects by rigid definition and forces them to play their part in his ritualistic patterns. Some of his less original followers carry on in the traditional way, using objects simply as symbols or as foundations for extended metaphors. Only Ponge, it seems to me, has a jolly, pagan, pantheistic approach; he sees the mystery, and hints that it might become sickening or terrifying, but in the end he opts for relative sanity and cheerfulness.

Let me quote, in conclusion, from his prose poem, *L'Objet poétique*, which contains a short but ingenious philosophy of aesthetics, based on the necessity of the object:

L'homme est un drôle de corps, qui n'a pas son centre de gravité en lui-même.
Notre âme est transitive. Il lui faut un objet, qui l'affecte, comme son complément direct, aussitôt.

Ne serions-nous qu'un corps, sans doute serions-nous en équilibre avec la nature.
Mais notre âme est du même côté que nous dans la balance.
Lourde ou légère, je ne sais.
Mémoire, imagination, affects immediats, l'alourdissent; toutefois nous avons la parole (ou quelque autre moyen d'expression): chaque mot que nous prononçons nous allège.
*Dans l'*écriture *il passe même de l'autre côté.*

Lourds et légers donc je ne sais, nous avons besoin d'un contre-poids.

Il nous faut donc choisir des objets véritables, objectant indéfiniment à nos désirs.
Des objets que nous rechoisissions chaque jour, et non comme notre décor, notre cadre; plutôt comme nos spectateurs et nos juges; pour n'en être, bien sûr, ni les danseurs, ni les pitres; —Enfin, notre secret conseil.
Et ainsi composer notre temple domestique.

Man is a queer creature, a body which doesn't contain its centre of gravity within itself.
Our soul is transitive. It needs an object to serve as its immediate and direct object.

Were we pure body, we should no doubt be in a state of equilibrium with nature.
But our soul is on the same side of the scales as we are.
Is it heavy or light? I am not sure.
Memory, imagination, immediate impressions weigh it down; however, we have speech (or some other means of expression): each word we utter makes us lighter. If we write, *it even moves to the other side of the scales.*

Are we heavy or light? I am not sure, but we need a counterweight.

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We have, then, to choose real objects, which resist our desires indefinitely.
Objects that we re-choose every day—and not as a setting or a background; but rather to watch us and judge us; so that we, in relationship to them, are neither dancers nor clowns;
—In a word, our secret council.
And this is how we build our private temple.

This is not unlike a restatement of Baudelaire's

La Nature est un temple où de vivants piliers
Laissent parfois sortir de confuses paroles;
L'homme y passe à travers des forêts de symboles
Qui l'observent avec des regards familiers.

PERHAPS, THEN, Symbolism should be quoted alongside Surrealism and Existentialism as a major source of the contemporary obsession. But there is something new in the present synthesis of all three movements; the object is symbol and anti-symbol, totem and black magic, point of ambiguity and point of rest. "Feeling for Nature" has certainly come a long way since Rousseau and Wordsworth.

J. G. Weightman

Puppets in Catania

In nocturnal alleyways, the puppets dance,
Or rather joust and fly. Snow on Etna like a linen drape.
Inside, Paladin seizes Paladin by the nape
Of creaking neck and chokes him till he dies.
Across the suffocating stage the victim lies.
No dialect pity gives him half a chance.

The same old stories as on country carts,
Roland and Oliver, Charlemagne. Colours
Are gaudy, red and green and stubble yellow.
The puppets are word perfect in their wordy parts
That allow no respite, but with oaths
Gigantic as the gestures cuff or ply their troths.

A winter sea outside, like frozen grape;
Hills rise and fall, in febrile, tented, shape.
Are our own antics quite so coarse, so trite,
Our methods brazen, as these tight,
Grunting whores, these catapulting knights?
All meanings are ambiguous, so its all right.

Alan Ross

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Berlin

THE *well-known Marxist philosopher, Professor Ernst Bloch, has now been expelled from the East-German Academy of Sciences. Bloch, who was in the West when Ulbricht's wall was erected last 13th August, did not return to his home in Leipzig. The official reasons for his expulsion were that he and his philosophy "misled young people to give up all honour and conscience on behalf of the national enemy"; he had become "the real Spiritus Rector of counter-revolution...."*

DIE WELT

London

THE SHADOW *of Bill Sykes's body hanging from a rope has been eliminated from the final television episode of "Oliver Twist," a B.B.C. official said. The previous episode, in which the murder of Nancy was shown, was criticised in the House of Commons.*

THE TIMES

Moscow

IDA KAR'S *collection of portrait photographs, first seen in the Whitechapel Art Gallery in 1960, is the first exhibition by a British artist in the Soviet Union. The collection which has just opened in Kalinina Street to-day, has several changes. Her picture of the Huxley brothers, Julian and Aldous, gazing intelligently at each other on a sofa, has been eliminated. So has a portrait of James Pope-Hennessy, Queen Mary's biographer. They have been replaced by Noel Coward, Jean-Paul Sartre, and a new portrait of Braque.*

SUNDAY TELEGRAPH

Bonn

LEOPOLD SENGHOR, *poet, and President of Senegal, was asked why he preferred to send his young African students to study in the Soviet Union, and he replied: "He who studies in Moscow comes back an anti-Communist...."*

DER SPIEGEL

New York

ONE *of the most painful decisions dictionary unabridgers face is what to do about those obscene words that used to be wholly confined to informal discourse but that of late, after a series of favourable court decisions, have been cropping up in respectable print. The editors of the 1937 edition of "Webster's International," being gentlemen and scholars, simply omitted them. The editors of the new 1961 "Webster's," being scientists, were more conscientious. All the chief four- and five-letter words are here, with the exception of perhaps the most important one. They defend this omission not on lexical grounds but on the practical and reasonable ground that its inclusion would have stimulated denunciations and boycotts. There are, after all, almost half-a-million other words in their dictionary—not to mention an investment of three-and-a-half million dollars—and they reluctantly decided not to imperil the whole enterprise by insisting on that word.*

THE NEW YORKER

Amman

JORDAN *to-day banned the entry of* Lady Chatterley's Lover, *and also* Face-to-Face with Arab Nationalism, *by Jack Poland. The first is considered immoral, and the other "misleading."*

DAILY MAIL

London

THE *Conservative defeat in the Orpington by-election has cast a gloomy shadow. Lord Hailsham has said: "You cannot lead the Conservative Party from behind like the Duke of Plaza Toro, or with bits of paper written by civil servants. It is essential that my colleagues should make ministerial speeches of a high order. You cannot lead a party in bad English, rich in platitudes and violating every principle of good grammar...."*

THE TIMES

London

JOHN & *Roy Boulting, the brothers who made the films "Brothers-in-Law" (about the law) and "I'm All Right, Jack" (about trade unions) yesterday found themselves locked in battle with a union and their fate in the hands of lawyers. Both might find it not wholly without humour, Mr. Roger Parker, Q.C., their counsel, said in the High Court. He asked Mr. Justice Salmon to rule that as employers they could not be compelled to join the Association of Cinematograph, Television and Allied Technicians, the film technicians' union.*

The union's contention, he said, involved a claim to be entitled, as it were, to walk over the boardroom and take over the management with which they would normally be bargaining.

"That, perhaps, has a slightly 'Alice in Wonderland' touch about it," he went on. "If I may be forgiven for adapting from that fantasy, I would say of the union:

How cheerfully it seems to grin,
How neatly spreads its claws.
And welcomes all employers in
With gently smiling jaws.

DAILY TELEGRAPH

SCHILLER'S *"William Tell" will be the opening production in the newly-renovated* Deutsches Theater. *The director is Wolfgang Langhoff who has recently been attacked for his "unsocialist repertoire" and for his lack of sympathy for more contemporary drama. The latest issue of the East Berlin "Theater der Zeit" quotes a new interview with Langhoff in which he now states: "'Tell' is the story of a victorious people's revolution against foreign rule and tyranny. As I re-read it, I had to think of Cuba and her people's revolution, of Fidel Castro and his patriotic fighters, of the struggle for liberation in Vietnam, of Lumumba in the Congo, of all the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America who are now freeing themselves from the imperialist yoke...."*

DIE WELT

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BOOKS & WRITERS

Being Young Poets

Who's Genteel? — By STEPHEN SPENDER

THE APPEARANCE of Volumes I and II of the *Penguin Modern Poets*, and of a volume called *The New Poetry* (Selected and Introduced by A. Alvarez) in a series called *The Penguin Poets* (perhaps only a relation, several times removed, to *Penguin Modern Poets*) seems to offer one of those break-throughs for poets which happen once every twenty years. Remember *Georgian Poetry*? and *New Signatures*? There seems to-day the possibility that poetry might discover the same kind of public as supports the Royal Court Theatre. Some even went there on a Sunday evening to hear the Russian poet Evtushenko read his poems.

There seems added hope that this might happen because, although the poetry of the past decade is not part of a movement of all-the-arts, it makes demands on the reader no greater than those of modern painting or music. Poets like Lawrence Durrell, Elizabeth Jennings, R. S. Thomas, Dom Moraes, Thom Gunn, Ted Hughes—different as they are in many respects —offer very much the kind of sensuous pleasure one gets from the music of Michael Tippett or Benjamin Britten, the painting of Sutherland, Piper, or Vaughan. It might be said that the work of all these artists proceeds from a sense of the values of civilisation heightened by an awareness of the destruction threatening it. In some this awareness becomes tragic, in others it takes the form of a perhaps too gentle insistence on the values of pleasure, personal relations, the flesh, and so on, a refusal to be privately miserable about public tragedy.

One would expect then that the kind of people who go to Tate Gallery special exhibitions, and concerts at the Festival Hall, would read the poetry of Hughes, Durrell, Elizabeth Jennings, and others, for the same kind of pleasure. And a good many of them do, and perhaps as the result of these Penguins, a good many more will.

What may prevent them is, I think, the *angst* which surrounds the reading, and (I am afraid) sometimes also the writing of poetry. This nervousness is the result, I suggest, of the fact that poetry is hedged round with critical directives and warnings. This of course is partly true also of the other arts. But the criticism of painting seems to take the form largely of expressing internal quarrels between the protagonists of different schools of painting, and people who like painting may ignore professional disputation. Criticism of music seems to concertgoers, when it is not being simply a helpful introduction to a work, a specialisation apart from the music itself. Moreover, surprisingly, in contrast to criticism of the other arts, during the present century, musical critics have developed a marked tolerance for music. When I was young, Verdi was considered to be in bad taste, Puccini in worse. Later, Wagner was execrated, and W. J. Turner could make a living writing week after week explaining why his music was bad. To-day, it's all right to like Verdi, Puccini, Wagner, Richard—and even Johann—Strauss.

The effect of criticism on poetry is inhibiting for several reasons. The fundamental one is no doubt that the criticism is in the same medium as the art—words. In recent times a great deal of critical energy has been intensified almost to the degree of poetry itself, to upholding the work of certain poets, and infusing poetry itself with the critic's awareness of what approved elements a poem ought to contain. A good many poets write criticism, and some critics write poetry. Any literary editor knows that many poems are written to-day which conform as it were to examination-standards arrived at by the writer assiduously studying the prescriptions set for modern poetry by critics.

I do not mean that criticism is a "bad thing," or that modern poetry could have developed without it. What I do mean is that one unfortunate result of the ingrowing of critical consciousness into the creative process, and of the elevation of the poetry reviewer into an arbiter of a kind which has no parallel in art or music criticism, is that for common readers

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modern poetry is an area surrounded by electrified barbed wire. So far from the reader being told that he may plunge in, enjoy what he likes, develop his judgment—as is more or less the case with the other arts—he is forever being told that if he likes the wrong thing he is not so much making himself a laughing stock as indulging in a squalid error.

We have recently been told by Mr. Kingsley Amis (in *The Spectator*) that W. H. Auden has not written a single line of poetry since he went to America in 1939. What are we to make of this? Those poor readers who have been reading hundreds of lines of Auden during the past twenty years have been innoculating themselves as it were with sterilised water, empty air. How bad for them. Better to turn on the Light Programme, you may be sure that whatever is being played contains at least some bars of *music*. This is, indeed, possibly the moral which Mr. Amis wishes to draw. Mr. Amis is a Fellow of a Cambridge college, critic, novelist, and poet. Who is there to dispute his authority? But at least it may be said that in no other art would one practitioner speak of the work of a fellow artist with an assurance which seems to imply a contempt for the art itself.

THESE PENGUINS MAY be taken as a parable demonstrating the anxiety surrounding modern poetry. The two in the "modern poets" series have no editor, no introduction, nothing. It is as though no one wanted to be responsible for a choice including Lawrence Durrell, Elizabeth Jennings, R. S. Thomas, Kingsley Amis, and Peter Porter. The kind of information—who is Peter Porter, for example?—which would be useful to the reader (since a good deal of Peter Porter's poetry has strongly autobiographical references) is withheld. When we come to *The New Poetry*, Lawrence Durrell, Elizabeth Jennings, and Dom Moraes are discreetly dropped (perhaps these are the ones for whom no editor would accept responsibility), and there are two prefaces. The first by Mr. Alvarez explains that his choice is "personal." The second, also by Mr. Alvarez, explaining the reasons for his choice, makes one reflect that if you fed poems into a machine which knew all the answers, the choice would, I suppose, be "personal" to that machine. Mr. Alvarez does know all the answers.

His main introduction takes the form of an essay entitled *The New Poetry*, or *Beyond the Gentility Principle*. To study it is to learn a good deal about the electrified barbed wire entanglement surrounding poetry. Incidentally this title implies the opposite of what it says. Reading it one would suppose that Mr. Alvarez meant that there was a new poetry whose chief distinguishing feature was its being "beyond the gentility principle." Reading the essay one discovers that the new British poetry is not in any significant sense new, and that it is too genteel.

MR. ALVAREZ TAKES specimen poems by his writers and passes judgment on them. A poem by Philip Larkin is, we are told, "New Yorkerish" in its evocation of the English scene, "his horses are *social* creatures of fashionable race meetings and high style"; whereas the horses in Ted Hughes' *A Dream of Horses* have a "violent impending presence," though (in case the reader likes it too much) "the poem has a number of romantic, quasi-mediaeval trappings which verge on the pretentious." "Verging on the pretentious," is a judgment which Mr. Alvarez can make with authority.

Surely the idea that an anthology of contemporary creative work has to be introduced with an essay by a professional reviewer telling the reader what to think, is peculiar to poetry. Novels and volumes of stories are not preceded by the reviews of opinionated critics. When we go to the theatre a note in the programme does not explain in which scene of his *Luther* John Osborne employs contemporary idiom effectively to suggest historic dialogue, in which others he fails. But everyone accepts that Mr. Hughes and Mr. Larkin, like ancient mariners, have to be paraded each with an Alvarez strung round his neck.

Mr. Alvarez' strange theme is (as I have noted) that the new British poetry—which he has come here perhaps not to praise but to bury—is not new (though presumably it was he who provided the title of his own anthology). Or, rather, if it is new at all it is only new in the sense of being of the 1950s. It is the very opposite of new, in that it negates the genuine new poetry of "the great moderns" (by these he means Eliot and Pound in the early part of the century). "Since about 1930 the machinery of modern English poetry seems to have been controlled by a series of negative feed-backs designed to produce precisely the effect Hardy wanted" (the reference is to Hardy's remark to Robert Graves that "*vers libre* would come to nothing in England").

PAUSE, READER, to shed a tear over a living and practised art described by a critic of repute as a "machine controlled by a series of negative feed-backs" designed (presumably without human intervention) to produce an effect "desired" by a dead master. (It is typical of Mr. Alvarez' way of going about things that in the passage just quoted Hardy never said he *wanted* this.)

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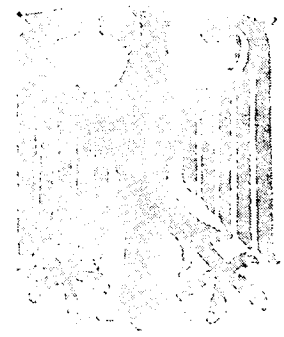
This introductory essay is full of generalisations resembling laundry baskets into which poets are packed like dirty linen. "The thirties poets reacted against those of the twenties by asserting that they had no time to be difficult or inward or experimental; the political situation was too urgent." This must be taken together with what seems to be Mr. Alvarez' view that Auden was the only poet of the thirties anyway (apart from Louis MacNeice, who is admitted in a parenthetic afterthought). "His [Auden's] example encouraged a whole swarm of poetasters"—so much for the other poets. By such gross simplification it is possible to overlook Empson who was certainly difficult, David Gascoyne who was certainly inward, and that the thirties was the decade of surrealist experiment. MacNeice (whose work Alvarez approves of) pointed out in his *Modern Poetry* that two thirds of the poems by his contemporaries in the thirties had nothing to do with politics; and Auden's most influential work of that decade, *The Orators*, was certainly difficult.

We are told next that Dylan Thomas (who, it is admitted, "was not only a fine rhetorician, [but] also, in his early poems, had something rather original to say") was "under constant pressure from the literary Public Relations Officers to continue at all costs less with his poetry than with his act as the blindly inspired poet." Names, please. Who were these P.R.O.s? And when did they exercise their pressure? As I remember, early and constant friends of Dylan Thomas were Norman Cameron, Ruthven Todd, and Vernon Watkins, none of them exactly P.R.O.s. Readers of *New Verse* will recall that Dylan Thomas was under critical pressure of a quite different kind. For better or worse, Dylan Thomas endured inner forces of his own nature: to make money, to have another drink, to spout in public. If there were forces outside that responded to these needs, this makes no difference to the fact that his strength and weaknesses were his own. Mr. Alvarez, who talks about the need for "a new seriousness," seems incapable of understanding the thing that is most serious in art: that an artist's pressures come from within. A poet may not be "responsible" in the public and ordinary social sense, but he is, in what concerns his art, responsible to his vocation. The environment may create difficulties for him and offer him temptations but it is not to be held responsible for his failures, unless he lives under a tyranny and is silenced altogether.

Dylan Thomas lived, as poets should do, in a world of purgatory, hell and heaven. To say that Dylan Thomas was ruined by Public Relations Officers is a much worse denigration of him, and of poetry, than to say he betrayed himself.



AUGUST 1914

As a historian, **Barbara W. Tuchman** has been compared to Cecil Woodham-Smith by The New Yorker and to C. V. Wedgood by Cyril Falls in The Listener, who continues, **'a magnificent achievement . . the maps are excellent . . the illustrations equally good. An excellent piece of historical work.'** Maps and photographs, 45s.

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CONSTABLE

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So Dylan Thomas is processed into "the second negative feed-back: a blockage against intelligence." And: "The third stage was yet another reaction: against wild, loose, emotion. The name of the reaction was the Movement, and its anthology was Robert Conquest's *New Lines*.... The pieties of the Movement were as predictable as the politics of the thirties poets." Smart, but pause to ask "Why were the politics of the thirties poets *predictable*?" And if they were so, please name one person who predicted them—that is, predicted them *before* they happened, not like Mr. Alvarez, thirty years after. And did Mr. Alvarez predict "the pieties of the Movement"?

Mr. Alvarez quotes a line-and-a-half from Mr. Philip Larkin's *Church-going* in which the Movement's pieties are "summed up":

Hatless, I take off
My cycle-clips in awkward reverence.

And we are told "This is the third negative feed-back: an attempt to show that the poet is not a strange creature inspired; on the contrary, he is just like the man next door—in fact, he probably *is* the man next door."

Now I DON'T KNOW WHAT machine Mr. Alvarez rides, nor why he thinks that "the image of the post-war Welfare State Englishman" is someone who "has a bike—not a car." I am inclined to think that Mr. Alvarez must be the only Welfare State Englishman who ever thought this—but no matter, the point is that it is perfectly possible to ride a bike and be "a strange creature inspired"! Dangerous biking, Mr. Alvarez! To suggest that the attempt of Mr. Larkin's *Church-going* is to show that the poet is "just like the man next door" is rather like saying that the attempt of Jesus Christ was to show that God is just like the man next door. In a sense it was, but that is not what Mr. Alvarez means. And in *Churchgoing* if the poet is ordinary like his neighbour, his neighbour may also be extraordinary like the poet.

Mr. Alvarez concludes that the "negative feed-backs" support an attitude to life predominant in British poets to-day "where the concept of gentility still reigns supreme. And gentility is a belief that life is always more or less orderly, more or less in order, people always more or less polite, their emotions and habits more or less decent, more or less controllable: that God, in short, is more or less good."

This is, surely, a frivolous conclusion, the result of the literary journalistic fashion of judging work in terms of externals: movements, the influence of antecedents, the poet setting up in his poetry the "image" of his social stance, the "pressure" of outside forces upon him, etc. All this explains more about the oppression to which poets are submitted by literary journalists than about their poetry. One characteristic which Auden, Thomas, and Larkin have in common is their awareness of individual life as the religious predicament of consciousness enclosed within a particular environmental conditioning. In stating the values which they regard as significant they are aware of having to relate them to surrounding life, of having to communicate them to those for whom the poetic does not provide the pattern of their living—the bank clerk, the "ordinary" citizen of the welfare state.

The post-factual-predictable (I am trying to make sense of Mr. Alvarez' idea of "predictability") elements in the translations of Mr. Evtushenko's poems are obvious—they are the image of the young poet, representative of his generation, in the post-Stalinist Soviet situation, elbowing room for free expression of his ideas. But the poetry does not lie in "the attempt to show that the poet" is such a representative of his generation. It lies in something quite else, the felt presence of an intensely aware individual inner life, and it is this which one searches for in the translations without being sure that it is there. One is, of course, very willing to suspend judgment about Mr. Evtushenko's poems, to regard those one has seen as having, in Russian, untranslatable elements of rhythm, pattern, sensibility, things *made as* apart from a situation stated, which are poetry. But one's misgivings do show that it is inward life projected which one looks for in poetry, and that poetry is not just external situations reflected by the poet in his work.

MR. ALVAREZ' CHOICE IS better than his introduction. But he claims that this "personal" choice is based on critical consideration, so it is fair to point out that an American poet likes British contemporaries who do not appear in these pages. *Robert Lowell greatly admires the poems of Jon Silkin.* I italicise this because it indicates that when it comes to making his British choice, Mr. Alvarez seems himself to prefer the genteel to the impassioned, the despairing, the ecstatic. There is nothing here by Christopher Logue, or by Dannie Abse, poets who have more in common with the un-genteel Americans than do those chosen.

It seems to me that if you attack contemporary British poets for being "genteel," you imply that this is an attitude unconsciously adopted, a trap difficult to avoid. You should therefore be sure that you yourself have none of the characteristics of "the gentility principle."

Mr. Alvarez' view of what is and what is not genteel, like the anti-cliché clichés of his

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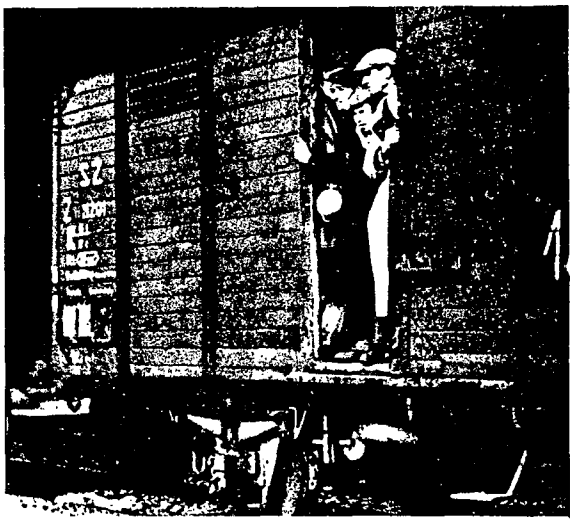

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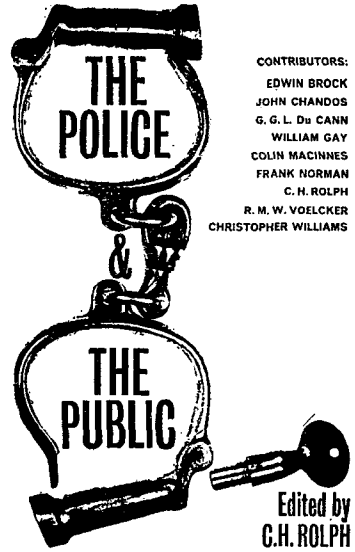

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critical attitudes, goes back thirty years, from which point in time he seems to himself a rebel—a rebel, like Lawrence, Leavis, or Eliot. But this is 1962.

Others might ask what, in 1962, can be more genteel than to dilute the values of T. S. Eliot with those of D. H. Lawrence; to be unable to write five pages without citing Leavis; to elevate American poetic examples as bludgeons with which to hit British ones, while at the same time, in all other respects, being anti-American[1]; to base a critical vocabulary on the dogmatic statements of thirty years ago, and use it for generalising homilies directed against British poets; to praise whatever accords with the most sophisticated current taste, while frequently asserting your superiority to the *chic* and the modish; to give a general impression that your conclusions are based on sociological statistics; to like jazz and let it be known that you are secretly intoxicated by the whirling pleasures of mass culture; to introduce the qualifying and knowing "of course" at least once in every paragraph?[2]

The above seems to me to provide the pattern for the genteel literary journalist of 1962. I do not know how far Mr. Alvarez would fit into such a suiting. But I think he might have examined his measurements before taking up his stance beyond the gentility principle.

As for this review, I would not claim that it advances a single step beyond what is perfectly genteel.

[1] The arrangement of Mr. Alvarez's anthology is meant to demonstrate the superiority of American poets over English ones by juxtaposing two outstandingly dynamic Americans against the genteel English. That the English literary inferiority complex has now become a cliché of orthodox literary journalism in England was demonstrated a year ago in the special number of the *Times Literary Supplement* entitled *The British Imagination* where there was scarcely an article—on poetry, fiction or scholarship—in which the anonymous critic did not state that of course the Americans were our superiors in that branch of literature. To genuflect before American superiority in the arts is the hallmark of English intellectual gentility in the 1960s.

[2] An example of the perfectly genteel use of "of course" occurs as we go to press, in *The New Statesman*, June 1st, 1962—of course, by Mr. A. Alvarez:

> " 'From the moment Robert Wagner's thoughtful and limbo-like set was dressed with light, until the last futile and expectant handclasp was hesitantly activated between the two searching vagrants, the San Francisco company had its audience of captives in its collective hand.'
>
> The play, of course, was *Waiting for Godot* and the drama critic worked for the prison newspaper at San Quentin."

Clichés Across the Sea

By Marcus Cunliffe

An American lady, Mrs. Orsemus Bronson Boyd, presumably the wife of an army officer, wrote a book in 1894 called *Cavalry Life in Tent and Field*. It contains an appendix on "American Civilisation as viewed by Weeping Weasel, late chief of the Kiowas." The spirit of Weeping Weasel lives on in figurative hunting-grounds. Francis Williams's *The American Invasion*,[1] a book by one of our new life-peers, takes a look at this alien, transatlantic civilisation and decides that it is heap bad. Lord Francis-Williams (as he now is) is an intelligent man who has produced a stupid book. He may have been contaminated by the very things he castigates—slickness, commercialism, demagoguery and the like. Perhaps through too many television appearances he has come to confuse an eye-catching "story" with a real subject. At any rate his little book has the qualities of a vulgar television programme assembled in haste. The style is melodramatic, everything is oversimplified and pictographic, too many notions are thrown in and then forgotten. There is a spurious air of open-mindedness. In the closing shots the commentator, smiling and sucking his pipe, every inch an Englishman, is faded

[1] Anthony Blond, 18s.

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out on a vaguely hortatory note. So, before the finale we are given a rapid look at the scale of American investment in British industry, and at the growing "Americanisation" of British life. Then, in order to show that we are being invaded by a foolish and somewhat vicious civilisation, we are offered some summary indictments of instalment buying, conformity, McCarthyism, etc., in the United States. The line of argument is superficial, erratic and second-hand at best. Where the author cites a personal experience to prove a point (*e.g.*, as a case of American "parvenu formality," the insistence of a headwaiter at the Rockefeller Plaza that Mr. Williams should wear a jacket), his generalisation has a comical inefficacy. It seems typical of such a book that the proofs are not proved in a typographical sense either. Wherever it is possible for the author and printer to spell a name wrong they have done so.

THE PITY IS THAT there is a real subject here. Indeed, there are several real subjects which are worthy of sober and extended discussion, and which probably ought to be kept separate from one another. Thus, many features of American life are displeasing and it is perfectly legitimate for an outsider to examine them. The desirability and the likelihood of maintaining separate national characters, identities, and institutions would form another theme. A third subject would be the role of lesser allies (ourselves) in relation to a superpower (the U.S.A.), and the degree to which the lesser power may expect to conduct a foreign policy independent of, or perhaps in disagreement with, that of the greater. The trouble is that Mr. Williams jumbles all these together, and allows the emotions aroused by the first theme to colour his comments on the others. One is not asking him to accept without demur the proposition that every aspect of American influence is part of an irresistible and beneficent process. Perhaps Gladstone may have shown too much equanimity when he said, speaking of the probability that the United States would "wrest from us our commercial supremacy":

> We have no title; I have no inclination to murmur at this prospect. If she acquires it, she will make the requisition by the right of the strongest and best. We have no more title against her than Venice or Genoa or Holland has had against us.

It could be maintained that the United States exercises an influence on British sovereignty, political and cultural, that is conscious, selfish and harmful. To demonstrate this one would have to acknowledge, to begin with, the reality (not the wickedness) of power politics. I suspect

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that Mr. Williams and other Englishmen, including myself at odd moments, unconsciously wish that Britain were not a second-rate power but a fourth-rate one, so that we might be rid of the genuine responsibilities that remain, and might even be able to join in the blackmailing activities of those countries that are able to play the Russians off against the Americans. In our fantasies at any rate—the fantasies of films like *Whiskey Galore* and *The Mouse that Roared*, or of Peter Ustinov's play *Romanoff and Juliet* —there are hints of a longing not so much for Little-Englandism as for bijou-Englandism.

Then one would have to acknowledge the legitimate reasons for the spread of American products, techniques, and forms of entertainment. One would have to enumerate superior design and efficiency, superior methods of presentation (packaging, salesmanship, advertising), and success in appealing to mass markets and mass tastes (which is too easy to dismiss with a moan as "mass society," as if this too were both a recognisable modern monster and an American export). The fact to be conceded is that the competition between American and native products is a competition between two essentially similar societies, as any good businessman of Gladstone's era would have understood. In other words, both are committed to large-scale production, which in turn calls for complex systems of marketing. It is possible to dislike the tendencies of such societies: to say for example that there is too much advertising, too much stimulation of the desire for possessions. But it is silly to pretend that the British economy can or ought to depend upon a quite different set of operating principles from those of the United States.

Only when all these factors have been fairly weighed is it reasonable to consider at what point efficient British industry may be swamped by the mere bigness of American competition, or the consumer may cease to have a free choice between the native product and the more intensely promoted American product. Perhaps this is happening. Bigness and uniformity are a little depressing. The traveller may wish that Coca-Cola did not confront him at every turn. British manufacturers of similar fizzy brews may rightly believe that at this stage they have no chance of creating a rival soft-drink empire. Similarly, the creators and distributors of British strip-cartoons may feel that they could never challenge the universal sway of Donald Duck or Huckleberry Hound, or even match the modest success of "Peanuts," the strip-cartoon by Charles M. Schulz, which I see is distributed in Spain under the name Carlitos. That American game "Monopoly" is a horridly engrossing parable of business competition. The rich get richer, and can take more risks: the poor get poorer and more timid, and after a certain stage they have no prospect of beating the big men in the game. But after all, there was nothing to prevent some British soft-drink tycoon of Edwardian days from building a fortune on the widespread need for a palatable, cheap, bottled, and non-alcoholic drink. With the advent of refrigeration his son could have made it also a cold drink. Sarsaparilla, with proprietary additions, might have done the trick. Magic properties could be attributed to it (somewhat as Coca-Cola is said to be used as a contraceptive douche in Latin America). Nor need it be assumed that the struggle against American competition is hopeless. Failure is guaranteed only when, as in the case of far too many British products, the design is ugly, the workmanship shoddy, and the supply inadequate. Perhaps Gladstone typified his countrymen in being a little too ready to lie down on the job. Even so, how much more sensible and dignified his remarks are than the current mixture of blandness and self-pity of which *The American Invasion* is a symptom.

THERE IS MORE substance in a second book about the United States, Daniel J. Boorstin's *The Image: Or What Happened to the American Dream*.[2] Mr. Boorstin is a professor at the University of Chicago. He was a Rhodes Scholar and has been a visiting professor in Italy, France, Japan, Puerto Rico, and elsewhere. He has a sophisticated and nimble intelligence and a gift for aphorism. He has a strong dislike for *clichés* such as "image" (the "corporation image," etc.) and "in terms of" ("in terms of weather, we have had a wet spring"). Indeed his book is an attack upon *cliché*-living in the United States: living at one or more removes from reality. According to Mr. Boorstin, who certainly has no difficulty in assembling evidence, Americans are fast losing their capacity or their wish to distinguish between genuine events and what he calls "pseudo-events." This is the age of the pseudo-event, he says. The American public, fed on hand-outs, press-releases, digests, ghost-written stuff, and lulled by mood-music which is not meant to be listened to, begins to be interested primarily in the news about the news, and to respect celebrity more than eminence, the commentator rather than the comment. As a tourist, the American likewise insulates himself from actuality: he confines himself largely to Americanised food and accommodation, and to the inspection of certified attractions which he does not even look at properly but merely

[2] Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 30s.

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registers with his camera. This is not exactly a world of lies and deception. No particular swindle is intended; the American is his own victim.

The Image is a witty book with an ingenious theme. It is written without any flourish of moral indignation, and no crude contrasts of the United States with Europe are offered. One's initial doubts about the soundness of the thesis are of a minor order. It may be unfair, for example, to note that Mr. Boorstin has spoken of the United States with an almost defiant patriotism in his previous work. A few years back he praised Colonial Williamsburg, Inc., that elaborate re-creation of a whole town, as a likeably democratic American enterprise. Does he now regard Williamsburg as a pseudo-object? Or one might wonder whether the *clichés* he cites, tiresome though they are, are as significant as he believes. "In terms of" is overworked nowadays (as overworked as "massive," to which Edmund Wilson drew our attention a few years ago, apparently in vain). It is a mark of careless writing (see *The American Invasion*, pp. 144, 146, 147, and *passim*); but does it indicate an evasion of reality? Again, one might object as some reviewers have done that no satisfactory distinction is made between real and pseudo-events, and that insofar as a distinction can be made, not all pseudo-events are unimportant, or all real events important. *The Red Badge of Courage*, a wonderfully truthful description of warfare, was written by a man who had never seen a battle.

Or of course we might argue that American life is much nicer and less dominated by indirections than Mr. Boorstin says. We could stress its comfort, its viability, the sheer pleasures of newness and brightness and of buying things. Spending may on occasion be a gluttonous occupation, but it is not as joyless as many writers allege. In any prosperous society, most of the advertising men's task is already performed for them. The more pretentious practitioners may think they have set up conditioned reflexes in the public. They are wrong: the impulse is already present, and in large part it is a healthily careless impulse. The main justification for having money is to get rid of it, quickly and agreeably. Then, too, we could say that Americans are far less passive and gullible than Mr. Boorstin implies. Many of them are extremely cynical, above all about advertising. *Mad* magazine, which is among the American teenager's favourite reading, offers a continual onslaught against advertising. The foreign visitor, understandably stunned and irritated by the pervasive din of American advertising, may not

6

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realise that the din is in some ways a tribute to the growing immunisation of the American public: its attention is harder and harder to reach.

But these are subsidiary matters, arguments that Mr. Boorstin could easily counter. There are more substantial issues that he, like Francis-Williams, does not develop fully. American life is both better and worse than they say; they are too critical and not critical enough. One might make out a serious and fundamental case against American society, though this could not be done by comparing the United States with any of the other large nations of the modern world. Who, striking a comprehensive balance-sheet, could maintain that Russia, Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Argentine are in better shape than the United States, although certain features of life in each country may seem preferable? The grave charges against the United States would be the charges levelled by any stern moralist against mankind as a whole, though with special clauses to cover the American situation: vapidity, timidity, self-indulgence, callowness, hypocrisy, sentimentality, and so on. Thoreau did an admirable job of this kind in his *Walden*. But he, as far as possible, renounced what he denounced. If we are to emulate him our dissent ought to be equally radical. Then we would be absolved from the need to make allowances, to be aware of all the nuances of our subject. We need not then feel committed to scrutinise it from inside with the knowledge and subtlety displayed in, say, Daniel Bell's excellent collection of essays, *The End of Ideology*. But despite the many virtues of his book, Mr. Boorstin has reached an uneasy and ambiguous compromise between basic dissent and basic acceptance. For example, if one passionately objects to press-agentry and publicity, ought one's photograph to be printed on the endpapers: ought one to make television appearances, synchronised with the publication of one's book? These are not dishonest practices, but they have a slight whiff of the pseudo-event. They make one's words carry a little farther, but by robbing them of a little of their weight.

What led these two authors to write their books? One suspects that nostalgia may have played a part. Mr. Williams seems nostalgic for old working-class England, Mr. Boorstin for the old American Dream with its pioneers. Both men, I think, regret the loss of ways of life more pungent, more idiosyncratic, less mechanised, less standardised, less crowded. Such regret we can all share. The free spaces are filled, the edges rubbed smooth. In Hart Crane's words:

> *The last bear, shot drinking in the Dakotas,*
> *Loped under wires that span the mountain stream.*

That is a proper sentiment for poetry. As an unavowed ingredient in popular sociology it is a source of weakness. It encourages too sharp a contrast between past and present, and too generous an estimate of the past. The historical component is somewhat unsound in both books. Was not Mr. Boorstin's early America remarkably conformist, and even image-ridden, in many respects?

Nostalgia prevents the writer from treating his own age fairly. No doubt there are too many people in the world: ought we to massacre them, starve them, or let them die of disease in the time-honoured ways? No doubt economic abundance creates its own problems: are they worse than the problems of scarcity? No doubt civilised man, as he journeys home from his skyscraper office to his suburban home, is a rather dull creature, without much individuality. But for too long in the history of the world, and the history of the United States, we have been at the opposite extreme. Indeed the United States is still far more violent and unsettled than we would gather from these accounts. There can be no civility without a measure of docility. If we are to cease being wolfish can we avoid becoming sheepish? To my mind that is a preferable though not an ideal state of

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being, and all things considered America is a more interesting and congenial place than at any previous stage in its history. By absolute standards it is a cretinous and despicable country. Measured more leniently, against what mankind has done elsewhere, it looks not at all bad.

There is a Happy Land . . .

Island. ALDOUS HUXLEY. *Chatto & Windus*, 18s.

ALL THE REVIEWS that I have seen of Aldous Huxley's *Island* have considered it as fiction, as a novel: and, almost without exception, they have condemned it as a poor example of the fiction-writer's art. With this judgment I would on the whole agree; the characters are not very interesting, apart from the protagonist, and the details of his past life bulk too large in the narrative. But *Island* is only technically a novel; it is basically a Utopia, designed by one of the most intelligent of living men; and the ideas and ideal of this Utopia seem to me to be worth more serious consideration than the bare description of the more sensational points in a couple of half-contemptuous, half-mocking sentences.

The builders of Utopias, from Plato to William Morris, have designed their ideal societies to maximise a value or quality which they consider to be an absolute good, and which is insufficiently manifested in the societies of which the builders are citizens. Among these values have been justice, or rectitude; equality, or the absence of oppression; rationality or "common sense"; wisdom; national power; "racial purity"; permanent peace; universal prosperity; societies of artists and "makers"; and a few other social ideals. Our own radicals, in so far as they envisage an ideal society, put their major emphasis on Equality as an absolute value.

Aldous Huxley has taken Well-being (in his phrase Good Being)—the physical and psychological health of every member of the society—as his supreme value; and has tried to devise a society in which individual Well-being is maximised. To the best of my knowledge, this is a completely novel approach in Utopia-building; for all Huxley's predecessors health and happiness have been seen as the quasi-automatic result of removing oppression, or superstition, or injustice, or poverty, and not as primary aims. Nor has much thought been given to the content of this automatically derived health and happiness; it is tacitly (and quite inaccurately) assumed that everybody knows what health and happiness are; and they are really defined negatively, by the absence of the evils which the Utopian plan removes.

Huxley's plan is much more sophisticated. Almost alone among the Utopia-builders (to my knowledge, H. G. Wells is the only partial exception) Aldous Huxley has read widely in biology, physiology, and psychology; although his choice of the authorities to be followed is idiosyncratic, not to say cranky (a point which will be elaborated later), his insistence that physical and psychological health have to be planned and prepared for in the light of contemporary scientific knowledge of men's minds and bodies, rather than their social environment, is a distinct advance in realistic thinking. He does not invent cures for diseases incurable by modern medicine, such as cancer. No contemporary societies appear to take biology or physiology seriously; in none that I know of is "the age of consent," to take one example, linked with the menarche; and the greater longevity of women is consistently ignored in national retirement and pension planning.

In Huxley's Utopia, well-being is primary; the social environment, in so far as it has been consistently thought out (not very far), has as its major function the preservation of this well-being from demands or stresses which might interfere with it. I propose to analyse Huxley's account of Pala in the way in which a social anthropologist might analyse the account given by an observant but scientifically untrained traveller or missionary or government official of a hitherto undescribed people whom he had visited. In this way, both the pattern of the society, and the gaps and contradictions in the presentation of the material become clearer.

HUXLEY HAS MADE things easy for himself (as a Utopia-builder has a perfect right to do) by placing his Utopia in a fertile island with a clement tropical climate, so that the needs for organising food, warmth and shelter (so complicated in the temperate zones) are reduced to a minimum. Even so, the plan of administration is remarkably fuzzy; we are told that electricity is free, that there is a monthly issue of contraceptives to every married couple, that there are hospitals and biological research stations, and some manufacture; but there are no indications of how these activities are organised, or the personnel appointed, nor of the chain of command between (presumably) the Raja and his court, the federal units and the local installations. Huxley reverses the assumptions of his predecessors. They assumed that

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good government would (somehow, automatically) produce health and happiness: Huxley assumes that universal health and happiness will (somehow, automatically) produce good government.

By Aldous Huxley's definition, the healthy and happy are not interested in accumulating possessions, are not greedy and do not suffer from boredom; since objects are only valued for their use, not for their symbolic functions, and since food, warmth and shelter are within the reach of all (by the beneficence of nature), Huxley has been able to dismiss as irrelevant nearly all the problems inherent in large-scale manufacture and mass communications. He has not actually reversed the industrial revolution nor dis-invented the internal combustion engine; but the benevolent autocracy of his Raja and Doctor MacPhail and their successors has produced the equivalent of a filter which will take carefully selected products of the industry and science of this century, chiefly electricity, chemicals, and the fruits and processes of biological research.

To keep this high subsistence economy steady (Huxley's Utopia is set on an island, with a limited amount of land) population planning is essential. A "month's supply of contraceptives" is delivered free to each monogamous married couple (the type of contraceptive is not specified); before marriage the adolescents have a period of sexual promiscuity, but they are taught to practise *coitus reservatus*, which effectively avoids the risk of unwanted or illegitimate births. Those reviews which I have seen which have mentioned this point at all have done so with implied or explicit scorn; but it is worth remembering that the Oneida Community of the United States—perhaps the most successful of the nineteenth-century utopian communes—made this practice, which they called *carrezza*, central and obligatory to their communal life. Although the implicit admixture of self-restraint and self-abandonment is alien to our dionysian, ecstatic idealisation of sexual intercourse, it is, on the Oneida evidence, a perfectly valid practice.

After this period of promiscuity, the young people sort themselves out into monogamous couples, each living in a separate household. The normal family consists of two children: when a third is decided upon it is likely to be produced by artificial insemination, the donor being one of the distinguished men in Pala's history, living or dead, whose semen is preserved in a deep-freeze bank. This would seem to be an attempt to get the benefits of eugenics, without the savagery inherent in most current programmes (popular eugenics very quickly and logically develops into Naziism). The device is a perfectly feasible one, as current agricultural practice shows.

The small isolated family,—the "nuclear family" in anthropological terms—consisting of only one parent of each sex and two or three children, seems to be the breeding ground of most of the neuroses and distortions of personality which make for human misery, as well as for the intensity of feeling and emotion which informs the glories of Western art. In many parts of the world—perhaps most markedly in Polynesia—the nuclear family is submerged in what anthropologists call the "extended family," typically consisting of a multiple residence which houses all the brothers (or sisters) of a family with their wives and children, and in which the biological parents and the uncles and aunts are very little differentiated by the young children, so that the emotions which, in the nuclear household, are concentrated on one parent of each sex, are diffused among a number. Social anthropologists have reported that with such arrangements neurosis and personality distortions are very much less common than in the West, and so too is intensity of feeling. One of the most vivid of these accounts—and the one on which I think Aldous Huxley has drawn—is Margaret Mead's *Coming of Age in Samoa.*

In an attempt to keep the gains of both types of family constellation, Aldous Huxley has invented MAC—Mutual Adoption Clubs—in which groups of twenty nuclear families select one another on an "inclusive, unpredestined, voluntary" basis; they take mutual responsibility for the health and happiness of their fellow members, including dealing with incipient delinquency; children who are temporarily unhappy or angry at home can visit one of the club members for a period as soon as they can toddle.

This device seems to be inadequately thought out. As soon as you depart from the kinship basis of the extended family (as, for example, in Polynesia) or the neighbourhood basis (as in very many peasant villages or in the neighbourhood courts described in W. H. Whyte's *Organisation Man*) you are liable to get into endless complications of alternative and overlapping choices, of families who are wanted in too many groups, and families who are everybody's last choice. Nor, in the light of current psychological knowledge of the development of children in their first two years of life, is voluntary change of residence, after physical independence has been achieved, adequate to diminish, much less eliminate, the profound ambivalence produced by being reared in a small

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nuclear family. When the source of love and refusal, of attention and neglect, is a single person, ambivalence is the inevitable outcome. In the true extended family, the infant will be tended and fondled (perhaps not suckled) by a number of women from birth onwards.

HUXLEY's lack of attention to the vicissitudes of infancy and early childhood would seem to spring from his rejection of all the concepts of psycho-analysis. There is no evidence to suggest that he has read any of the psycho-analytic work of the last three decades, with its careful observation and recording of infant behaviour, in contrast to the earlier reconstructions from adult patients; and he wishes to preserve the concept of the unconscious as a receptacle for the mystical experiences to which he accords the greatest possible importance.

This rejection of the concepts of psycho-analysis continues in the account of the education of children from the age of five onwards. Huxley's rethinking of the early years of education (chiefly described in Chapter XIII, pp. 197–228) is by far the most substantial part of his invention, coherent and carefully elaborated. The pages are so full of imagined adaptations of existing lines of research that a summary can only do them scant justice.

The children are very completely diagnosed and treated to enhance all potential talents and to minimise all potential delinquencies and power cravings. Here Huxley relies chiefly on Pavlov's reworking of the old theory of temperaments, and somatotyping as developed by W. H. Sheldon and his followers. He makes far larger claims for somatotyping than Sheldon has done, stating that potential power-seekers and criminals fall exclusively into two physical types which can be infallibly recognised early and dealt with remedially by pills and exercises for diverting fear and anger. For technical instruction he relies heavily on Piaget, emphasising that children can grasp abstract principles more easily than they can learn by rote. His curriculum is heavily and from the start weighted on biology; mendelianism, evolution, ecology and conservation are the first subjects taught with the three R's. Children are made to witness birth and death.

THE OTHER SUBJECT taught is what Huxley calls "psychology." This includes semantics, or a version of logical positivism; but the main emphasis is on various exercises of self-control, self-hypnosis and contemplation indirectly derived from Yoga and Tantric Buddhism. Schoolchildren have to do some work from the start,

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such as scarecrow duty; from the age of fourteen they do one-and-a-half hours' work a day; and their lives from 18 to 24 are divided between work and university education, typically sampling different kinds of work. Professional and clerical people do two hours' hard manual labour daily.

At the age of fifteen-and-a-half the young people undergo an initiation consisting of dangerous rock-climbing, a sort of religious ritual, and the first consumption of the *moksha*-medicine, an hallucinogen derived from a mushroom (presumably, as in Siberia, a species of *amanita*, rather than mescaline derived from the peyotl cactus); after which they are given sexual instruction and encouraged to engage in sexual activity.

The illumination from the hallucinogen is central to Huxley's Utopia, and provides the climactic chapter of the book. In his emphasis on the importance of this experience, I think Huxley neglects his adopted theory of temperaments. I am perfectly willing to believe that Huxley found a dose of mescaline illuminating; but when I took it some 27 years ago I found the distortions of vision and perception unpleasant and distasteful; I would never willingly undergo it again.

Much space is given to describing the syncretist religion of Pala, with a basis of Tantric Buddhism and assorted Hindu and other accretions, with a positive emphasis on faith and a negative emphasis on belief, and with quite a lot of mockery of conventional beliefs in religious figures and sacred books. This sort of synthesis is obviously feasible; but it would appear more appropriate to a receiving culture like California, than to an isolated one such as Pala.

I personally find the emphasis on mycomysticism and the related exercises uncongenial; but I think that a lot could be learned from this imagined society with its concentration on the well-being of the individual and on the prevention of neurosis, unhappiness, and delinquency, and the enhancement of potential talents, by the elaborate assessment and treatment of young children. Our knowledge is sufficient to employ many of these techniques now (though scarcely in the manner which Huxley describes); and I believe that a society which made such early assessments and used such prophylaxis would be a better and happier society for the change, a belief which I cannot hold for most of the political and utopian reforms currently advocated.

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FROM THE OTHER SHORE

Letter from Moscow

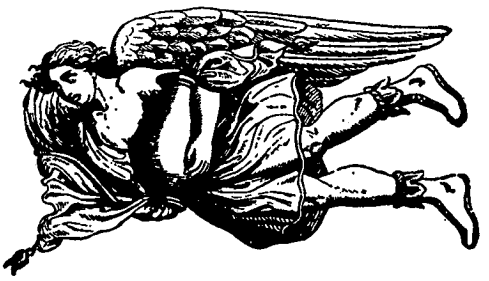
WHEN I ARRIVED in Moscow, the XXII Congress was still fresh in everyone's mind and Moscow literary circles were buzzing with rumours and predictions. So many different shades of opinion were expressed about art, and even about politics, that at first I had the impression of an intellectual ferment strong enough to be itself a sign of irresistible change. But, comparing it with the elation which followed the first attack on Stalin five years earlier, I thought the mood created by the renewed campaign against him was less optimistic, more nervous.

People explained this to me partly by the disappointed hopes of 1956—partly by the belief that any real advance towards freedom of expression was blocked by the country's economic difficulties ("a more prosperous country can afford a more liberal policy")—and partly by the fact that while the régime is much more permissive in practice than it was under Stalin, there is no change of dogma (the importance of this in the eyes of Soviet citizens would be hard to exaggerate).

In spite of the great difference between them, Stalinists and anti-Stalinists in fact profess the same doctrine of "socialist realism" to which all art must conform, and they define it in the same way. Thus a young provincial poet (who incidentally was an orthodox anti-Stalinist) said to me: "Our advantage over Western writers is that though we may have less talent we know where we are going." Neither of the two other writers who took part in the conversation challenged his defence of mediocrity, which indeed was doctrinally correct now as it would have been before Stalin's death. All that really mattered, he said, was "the message," though "style" had importance as the vehicle which it carried to the masses. Talent, it seemed, was even dangerous since it could be misused. A provincial novelist who had written a best-seller and whose face shone with virtue when he spoke of it, attacked the "bourgeois fiction" of a public of connoisseurs. "Proust was a snob writing for snobs," and he added: "Our duty is to write for the masses... so what can be a better test of literary merit than mass sales?"

In Moscow such views are rarely voiced so brashly, but not long ago their substance was defended by the reactionary Kochetov who has

MANYA HARARI, *who is the translator (with Max Hayward) of Boris Pasternak's* Dr. Zhivago, *has made several post-war visits to the Soviet Union. She is a director of the Harvill Press in London.*



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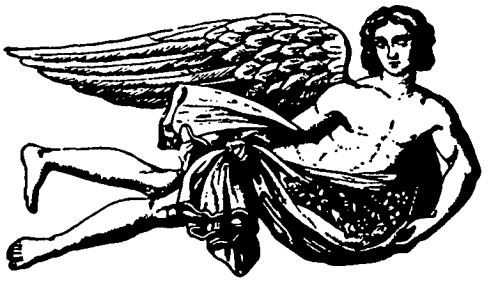

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since become the editor of the important literary journal, *Oktyabr*. On the other hand, the liberal poet, Tvardovsky, who edits the equally important periodical, *Novy Mir*, attacked Kochetov with seeming impunity at the recent Congress. Something new was clearly happening even though no one openly questioned the basic notion of the writer as the "chief propagandist." It seems that the positive duty of the writer is to show Soviet Man the way to his goal by presenting him with an image of society seen "in the light of the future"; his negative duty is to avoid crystallising opposition by dwelling on unpleasant facts. The only real question was whether he was now going to be allowed to use a little more "truth" as clay for his bricks.

THE PREOCCUPATION WITH TRUTH seemed to me to be more absorbing and more general than it had ever been in Russia. It was an essential part of the "new humanism" of orthodox young intellectuals. At a party in Leningrad some young people said to me: "Until now we have been too busy with external pressures. Now we must devote more attention to truth, honesty, kindness, and tolerance in human relationships. We must be less preoccupied with external things and turn our gaze inwards." The impatience of the young with hypocrisy was the theme of a recent play in which the hero, claiming his right to think for himself, refuses to join the Party because he wants to "say *Yes* or *No* when he really means it and not when the Party tells him to...." The same trend is reflected in the astonishing freshness of a crop of short stories by young writers such as Kazakov and Tendryakov who describe life outside the big cities with genuine realism. They are in no way subversive. In every collection there are some stories on prescribed themes; the rest are unpolitical-writing which can be judged on literary merit alone, and while they are not experimental in style, they carry on good 19th-century traditions with honest observation and using what they see to make their own statements about life.

Nor have the young people taken up this attitude without the support of some of their elders. Alexander Tvardovsky, who publishes some of the liveliest of the young, is almost a generation older than his protegés. And there is the same freshness about *Tarusa Pages*, an anthology edited by Konstantin Paustovsky (a contemporary of Pasternak), who is perhaps the most distinguished prose writer in the Soviet Union and a man generally liked and respected for his integrity.

THE APPEARANCE of this anthology was the literary sensation when I arrived in Moscow. Paustovsky told me about its origin. I saw him in Moscow, but he lives most of the year in Tarusa, a village near Kaluga which is a traditional centre for artists and writers. In 1960 some of the younger men brought him a plan for a collection of stories, sketches, and poems by local people. He agreed to be its editor. An edition of 70,000 copies was printed in Kaluga and put on the market. What Paustovsky did not tell me but many people asserted was true, was that when 4,000 copies of *Tarusa Pages* had been sold, the authorities noticed that it had come to birth *without* going through the official hoops. Its sale was stopped. Paustovsky then complained to the "highest quarters," and after some weeks the rest of the edition was back in the shops—a measure both of his standing and of the new liberalism.

The book contains much distinguished writing by both young and established authors, but an unpretentious article about children is particularly illustrative of its mood. It gives two examples of how children "are taught to lie."

A schoolteacher tells her class to write an essay about the May Day Parade. One child says that it was raining, that her goloshes had holes in them, so she didn't go. The teacher comments: "You are not telling the truth. Your parents are cultured people. It is impossible that they should not have taken you. Describe what you saw!" The child obediently sits down to write: "It was a sunny morning. The workers were marching in orderly ranks.... Everyone was joyful."

The other instance is of the editor of a children's paper who asks his readers to write and say what they would do if they were free to do whatever they liked. He later publishes what he claims to be the replies. In fact the printed letters are all from children who wish to eradicate disease or liberate Negroes. The letters from those who wanted a "free ticket to the moon" or a "magic pen to do their homework" are suppressed. The author's comment is that "half the truth is not the truth" and that "fear of the truth leads to something terrible...."

It occurred to me when I read this that it was precisely because truth is the most desired and the most feared of all commodities that the breakthrough of the "truth about Stalin" at the Congress was felt to be of the utmost importance. The official disclosures about him were said by some to be "a guarantee against its ever happening again." But I felt that by many the truth was welcomed with as much emotion simply for its own sake. "Silence is also a lie," a woman who had lived through the Stalin era told me, and she added: "We are all corroded by lies—the lies we heard and the lies we told." The lies she had told—because if she had not told them others would have to pay—were only lip-service which deceived no one, but she felt an unreasonable sadness about them; "they too," she said, "leave their trace." The "lie" of silence or of half-truth had burdened the country like a disease, making the pressure of memories intolerable.

LIP-SERVICE, however meaningless in itself, was exacted under Stalin as a weapon of disintegration; the defence against it was to preserve at least "inward truth" and "inward freedom." It was a costly refuge since it demanded a refusal to surrender any part of consciousness. Those who could not afford it fled from reality. The miracle is that so many did keep their integrity.

Much less lip-service is demanded of dissenters to-day. Intellectuals can escape most of it by staying in obscure jobs or doing research. But for those who refuse it altogether there is no more room in

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the society of the conforming than for a lunatic among the sane (it is only logical that rooms in lunatic asylums are actually found for some of them).

THE RECENT PAST is likely to flood literature for some time to come, if only because of what is felt to be owing to the victims: the dead who have not yet been honoured, the prisoners who have been mocked by the half-sheets of official notepaper which released them with the brief statement that their sentence "had been a mistake."

Alexander Fedin's current book is a novel about the war in which he tells how, when the Germans were before Tula, the officer in command of the garrison rang up the Kremlin to ask for anti-tank guns. But Stalin refused to speak to him, and all Malenkov promised to send was a dozen rifles. "Such facts," Fedin told me, "can now be disclosed." When I mentioned this to friends their comment was: "And think of it, thousands died with Stalin's name on their lips." The significance for art of the XXII Congress, Fedin said, was that "the historical facts can now be talked about and got into proportion."

For Ilya Ehrenburg, too, the meaning of the Congress was that the truth about Stalin—his crimes and his victims—could be disclosed. He must long have wanted to unburden himself, but it seems that when he began to write his memoirs he thought that he might have to stop at 1936; after the Congress he announced in *Pravda* that he would deal with 1937 and 1949, the two peaks of the Terror.

He said to me that the post-war purges were less terrible than those in the 'thirties—they were confined to the arrest of Party members and of former victims, and to the "massacre of Jewish writers." "History," he went on, "has yet to reveal Stalin's genius for deception. When the campaign against the Jews began, he would consult with the Jews in his entourage, assume a worried look and say: 'This smells of anti-semitism.'"

Victor Nekrasov, for his part, has lifted the "decent veil" drawn over the problem of returned prisoners. The hero of his *Kira Georghievna,* amnestied after Stalin, is welcomed back with cheerful kindness on condition that he keeps his embarrassing experience to himself. As a result, he remains isolated except from his fellow victims, who share his knowledge and form a society apart. It was also Nekrasov who, at the beginning of "the thaw," spoke out about the indiscriminate persecution of those who had stayed behind during the war in German-occupied territory.

What the Russians feel about the duty to commemorate the dead is shown by the curious incident which forms the background of Evtushenko's now-famous poem, *"Babiy Yar"* (though in this case it relates to Hitler's victims, not Stalin's).

Babiy Yar is the name of a park of culture laid out on the site where a Nazi massacre of the Jews took place and where the dead were buried in a mass grave. No monument was put up. Then a year ago, when irrigation trenches were dug, a flood of subsoil, water and mud welled up and drowned "hundreds." Rumours of the disaster, which was kept out of the press, flew round the country and simple people looked on it as a divine punishment for the use of an unmarked grave as a playground, refusing to accept the view that a healthy enjoyment of life is a better tribute to the dead than commemorative mourning.

IN MOSCOW I began to realise that the young "Left-wing" intellectuals were the government's best hope and worst headache. As an opposition they would be intolerable, but if their confidence could be won their support would be more valuable than that of the "Right." An alternative to silencing them was to allow them greater freedom and scope for their specialist interests. The authorities are attempting various solutions and are quite prepared to make some experiments.

I naturally wished to meet some of the young writers who had recently achieved great popularity, Evtushenko in particular. He was abroad (I had to wait several months before finally meeting him in London), but I often heard him talked about and saw something of several of his friends.

Most older critics still spoke of him as "a young man of promise" who had yet to prove himself and "find his path." But there was no doubt of the delirious admiration he evoked among the young. Thousands flocked to hear him read his verse in Mayakovsky Square and recently, when he had been billed to speak in a hall, students broke the windows to get in. Even in a provincial town a girl who had spent her holidays in Moscow told me with tears of emotion that in the crowd which pressed round him at one of his meetings his hand had actually brushed hers; she was a loyal member of the *Komsomol* but thought that the young should "think for themselves" and regarded Evtushenko as their spokesman.

Since last autumn it was also clear that the position he had won by acclaim was confirmed by official approval. *"Babiy Yar"*, which hints at the existence of Soviet anti-semitism, was attacked in the reactionary *Literatura i Zhizn* (known as *Literatura ne Zhizn'*—"a writer's is a dog's life,") but the editor was dismissed and Evtushenko allowed to continue his travels abroad.

Like others of the Evtushenko circle, "Ghenya" has dropped the use of his patronymic and adopted elegant beatnik clothes as the uniform of an élite of the International of youth. He is deeply conscious of his obligations as its delegate. Dr. Arnold could not have asked for more sense of responsibility from his young men. No Victorian romantic can have had a stronger feeling for the aristocratic duties of talent or the role of the liberal poet in the world.

A brilliant and healthily prolific poet as well as a young man of spirit, intelligence, good looks and charm, he is an ardent patriot and passionately devoted to the spirit of the revolution, no less "holy" because "dirty (i.e., Stalinist) hands" misused it for their foul deeds. He believes in the right to criticise injustice wherever he sees it. He openly admires many things in the West—and sufficiently disapproves of others to be safe from the charge of

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"kowtowing to things foreign." That the attempt should be made to use him as the Gagarin of Poetry abroad is inevitable, but this should not obscure his real gifts or his significance to his generation at home.

While his legend is unique, his popularity is shared by several others of whom he regards Bela Akhmadullina and Andrey Voznesensky as the most outstanding.

THE FIRST OF THE young people of his circle I met in Moscow was Robert Rozhdestvensky who has published six small volumes of verse in the past six years and whose name was up in big letters on posters announcing Poetry Readings. Twenty-nine, born in the Altai, he lives with his wife and small daughter in three rooms in one of the new blocks; the flat with its built-in Finnish furniture, bright as a pin, looking against the background of normal Moscow housing like a vision of tomorrow.

I asked him about "the new trends" in Soviet literature. The provincial writers I had met had flatly denied their existence, for "trends" smacked of "groups" which have been anathema since the 'twenties. Robert, while stressing that there were no groups, cheerfully admitted that there was "a new movement in poetry"—new because it spoke the language of its generation—and urged me to go to Mayakovsky Square and judge for myself its success among the young. (Evtushenko was to tell me that what the poets of the new wave had in common was their "difference from each other"—their independence.)

I also asked Robert how far he was aware of a didactic mission. To this he replied with touching Victorian sincerity: "I should like to help my readers to become better people." He added that poetry should be many-sided and have a philosophical content; no one doubted the importance of nature poems or, still less, of love poems; but "if Shakespeare had written only his Sonnets he would have been only a virtuoso of genius."

This was also the view of the eight or ten young people belonging to the same circle with whom I spent a long and enjoyable evening at the Writers' Club. They included Andrey Voznesensky, and also the novelist Aksenov who had written a best-seller almost all in tough slang, making the point that beatniks are often sound progressive elements at heart.

UNLIKE THE PROVINCIAL POET for whom "only the message mattered," these young people were brazenly occupied with the technical problems of writing, discussing metaphors and imagery now just as a few years ago they had argued over Evtushenko's new half-rhymes. Andrey said that poetry was becoming "increasingly scientific." I asked him whether this trend might not lessen its appeal to the masses—his reply was to tell me to go to Mayakovsky Square.

He described the reactions of various groups to his own readings. Young scientists had been particularly sympathetic; workers who had no idea of the technical side of poetry, were nevertheless able to appreciate the result, "just as a person may like a well-made car even though he has no idea of engineering." He had also read to women in a prison camp, who had wept, though he felt sure that they could no more follow the poems word for word than a congregation can follow liturgy in Slavonic.

Poetry, these young men told me, was itself becoming a kind of liturgy. It was always being read to crowds, and it attempted to replace "the solemn word," the symbols and the sense of mystery which liturgy offered. The young people were not religious, they said; but they had not the aggressive atheism of Party middle-brows.

The new poetry, according to them, spoke with "many voices," touched on more and more themes, and explored "private worlds." It struck me that their reading at the foot of Mayakovsky's statue was as paradoxical as the fact that Mayakovsky should have had a statue put up to him by Stalin (who would never have tolerated his revolutionary originality if Mayakovsky had not already been part of the epic past when he committed suicide in 1930). For in one sense the new poetry marked the end of an evolution which Mayakovsky began. His attempt to break the isolation of the poet by putting him at the service of the revolutionary State ended under Stalin in the total isolation of most poets—either through death, prison or silence, or through the divorce of poetry from its sources in private emotion and therefore also from its public. It was largely by rediscovering these sources that the new poets had found a common language with their generation.

SMALL VOLUMES BY three of Mayakovsky's rehabilitated contemporaries—Pasternak, Akhmatova, and Tsvetayeva—had been brought out in time for the XXII Congress. Tsvetayeva, who killed herself in 1942 (after her return from emigration and the destruction of her family), had not been published since the early 'twenties; Akhmatova had been in shadow since Zhdanov's attack on her in 1948; Pasternak's last two cycles of poems were still unpublished in Russia. The young poets spoke of the two streams of poetic tradition represented by Akhmatova and Tsvetayeva, the one "beautiful and sad like Akhmatova herself," the other virile and tragic. Akhmadullina (Evtushenko's first wife, described to me as "the Russian Françoise Sagan") was said to derive from the one, Voznesensky found the other closer to him. All acknowledged their debt to Pasternak, whom some of them had known. These were some of the links between this new generation of poets and the remarkable "silver age" of Russian art which preceded its eclipse at the end of the 'twenties.

Among the older writers of to-day, Ehrenburg is the acknowledged patron of Evtushenko and his friends. He has increasingly won the respect of the young by the courage of many of his writings in the past few years, and his mixture of sophistication and prudence fits him particularly well to be their guide now. Young men who sat at the feet of Pasternak in 1956 now sit at the feet of Ehrenburg; Pasternak's recklessness was as much a symbol of the thaw as Ehrenburg's experienced brinkmanship is of the climate of to-day.

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I LEFT THE Writers' Club delighted with my evening's entertainment. My hosts were endearingly friendly and irreverent, full of humour and talent and unspoilt by their success. Except for the elegance of their bohemian style, they might have passed unnoticed on any Left Bank in the West. They are not, however, "bohemians" but a carefully sifted élite whose position is at once highly privileged and highly precarious. Some of them are entitled to flats, cars, foreign books, foreign travel, and social visits to foreign embassies—privileges, by Moscow standards, greater than anything money can buy in the West. But they are also kept under careful observation and the policy towards them seems to be constantly under review.

VERY DIFFERENT from the Writers' Club was the scene in Mayakovsky Square, where I went one evening. This was clearly a grazing ground for goats, and the four hundred or so milling in front of Mayakovsky's statue had none of the serenity of the sheepfold.

The *druzhinniki*—volunteers from the Komsomol who co-operate with the police—were doing their best to break them up. Young poets were reciting poetry stubbornly through the hubbub.

"Why don't they read Mayakovsky?" shouted a man who looked like an angry schoolmaster.

"They do," answered another older man.

"Only the bad bits."

"Why shouldn't they read what they like?"

"They can read what they like but it must be good representative stuff." This was greeted with guffaws from the crowd.

"Why don't you meet in a youth club?" a *druzhinnik* asked a young workman.

"You have to have students' tickets to get in. I'm not a student."

"If you give me your address I'll send you a ticket for next Saturday." A smart new youth club had just been opened and its first poetry reading was to be televised, but the crowd only jeered: "It's just to get us off the streets."

"This is the place for us," said a student, looking up trustingly at Mayakovsky.

A tall poet leapt on to the steps at the foot of the statue and attempted to recite but was dragged down. One after another two young men were led away struggling and kicking by *druzhinniki*, girl *druzhinniki* tripping after. This was a signal for most of the crowd to disperse, but twenty or so stayed on to listen to the tall poet who now recited a long poem by Alexander Blok and followed it by one of his own. As soon as he had finished he linked arms with his friends and walked off towards the Metro station, but several young people followed him to thank him and shake hands with him.

The poetry readings had been going on regularly for over two years at weekends and on holidays. At one time a student insisted on reading the same poem week after week; it was called "The Manifesto of Man" and its subject was the enslavement of man by the machine. He was finally removed by the *druzhinniki*, but another student took his place and went on reciting the same poem until he too was removed and replaced by a girl who was arrested in her turn, but she reappeared a week later, having apparently convinced the authorities of her harmlessness. Since then there had been a number of incidents and just before I arrived in Moscow a meeting was broken up with more than the usual roughness.

That such meetings could be held at all was an amazing change since Stalin. Optimists took heart from it. Pessimists said: "It impresses foreigners." I continued to be impressed by the spirit of the young people.

The police, of course, could have stopped the meetings for good at any moment they chose. The use of the *druzhinniki* instead was a gesture to legality. It is officially claimed that no one is prosecuted for his opinions or need fear the State Organs unless he breaks the law. It is also claimed that Communism is so imminent that the State Organs are already beginning to share their functions with the public which exercises its own restraints. The *druzhinniki* were "the public" exercising its restraint. However repellent the device or the underhand brutality of the *druzhinniki*, the practical advantage for the habitués of the Square was that they could not have resisted the police without crossing the line between "hotheads" and "criminals." The issue may by now be settled, for the meetings in the Square may not survive the recent attack made on them by *Komsomolskaya Pravda*.

FOR THE FIRST TIME the régime has on its hands a generation of young people who are "normal," as their elders say. For while hardly any of the middle-aged are unmarked and have not had some spring broken in them, the young have neither first-hand memories of the Terror nor any feeling of guilt, real or imagined, for the notorious "cult of personality."

While the machinery of terror has not been dismantled and its occasional click into action is enough to keep most people on their toes, the régime is clearly anxious to avoid having to go back to its full use. It would probably feel it necessary to do so if there were serious signs of anything which resembled the Hungarian pattern of an alliance between young intellectuals and young workers. This is probably why the young poets' attempt to carry poetry "out into the streets and squares," as they put it, may be more than the government feels it can afford.

In other activities, writers and intellectuals are now encouraged to find the limits of permitted freedom by experiment. They are much wider than they were and it is possible that the government is awaiting the results of its own experiment before deciding where exactly to fix them.

Some young people are encouraged by this to "play dangerously," to go in for a kind of cultural brinkmanship. I thought some of the older and more timid were sometimes being brought to the verge of nervous collapse by the fact that the limits are no longer clearly visible.

Manya Harari

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LETTERS

U.P.I. Replies

IN THE ENCOUNTER pamphlet on "Castro's Communism," Mr. Theodore Draper sets out with considerable zeal and agility to discredit the United Press International dispatch of Dec. 2 on the speech of Fidel Castro.

Mr. Draper rightfully expresses abhorrence of tendentious writing. It is a pity that he then proceeds to indulge himself in precisely that on the grounds apparently that what is tendentious in someone else is not tendentious in him.

He observes with great justification that the speech was not one that "lent itself to isolated snips and pieces; it required an interpretive framework to make sense of its cross-currents and undercurrents."

True. Why then do the "snips and pieces" that he selects convey Castro's true meaning any more than the excerpts selected by anyone else?

Mr. Draper in his lengthy footnotes produces his own snippet to throw down the statement in the U.P.I. dispatch that Castro "kept secret" his true beliefs for expediency's sake.

Why, one can ask, did Mr. Draper ignore other passages which bore on the same subject?

Witness, for example, Castro's statement—as published in *Revolución*—as to why he had taken such great care in writing his defence for the trial following the Moncada attack in 1953.

> "It was written with sufficient care to expound a series of fundamental points without, at the same time, expressing views which would limit our field of action within the revolution, which would avoid that the movement which we believed we could lead to Batista's downfall would be very reduced and very limited.
>
> If we had not written that document with care, if it had been a more radical programme . . . you can be sure that the revolutionary struggle against Batista would not have acquired the amplitude which it acquired and which made victory possible."

Or, in referring to a situation in 1956:

> "We knew what a revolutionary programme was. If we did not emphasise it fundamentally through fundamental measures, it was because we knew that to emphasise a series of reforms and revolutionary laws, in the conditions under which the fight against Batista was developing, would simply weaken the campaign of the forces facing the Batista tyranny."

The foregoing, in Mr. Draper's view, does not justify the statement in the U.P.I. story that Castro had referred to a "policy of keeping secret his belief in Marxism during the early days of the revolution."

Yet Mr. Draper, in his own conclusion, finds it permissible to say that, "He (Castro) had deliberately concealed his true tendencies, deceived those who had believed in him and betrayed what he had claimed to stand for in order to obtain a broader mass base than the Communists were able to obtain."

In other words, what is accurate when Mr. Draper says it is tendentious when the U.P.I. says it. This is a remarkable double standard indeed.

In challenging the U.P.I. report that Castro's dedication to Marxism-Leninism dated at least to 1953, Mr. Draper cites the following statement by Castro (the reference being to the Moncada attack in 1953): "Then, already by that time, our revolutionary thinking was, in general lines, formed. Nevertheless, we were not full-fledged revolutionaries; we were much more revolutionary when we took over."

Castro did indeed say that. But what Mr. Draper seems to overlook is a later statement by Castro: "I believe absolutely in Marxism. Did I believe in it the first of January (1959)? I believed in it the first of January. Did I believe in it the 26th of July (1953)? I believed in it the 26th of July."

Mr. Draper is very correct when he calls the speech a "rambling, disjointed discourse." And he himself describes, "A good deal" of it as a "semantic smokescreen."

The remarkable thing, of course, is that Mr. Draper alone seems possessed of the ability to penetrate Castro's mind and to tell us what he meant to say, even to the point of dismissing Castro's own words when they happen not to support his (Mr. Draper's) particular interpretation.

FRANCIS L. MCCARTHY
U.S. Latin-American Editor

United Press International,
New York City

MR. MCCARTHY'S letter suggests that he does not set a very good example to the men who work under him. It is a horrible example of the same kind of distortion that went into the U.P.I.'s dispatch that I criticised.

To turn the tables on me, he asks why I "ignored" the passage on the Moncada attack of 1953. The answer is simply: I did not ignore it. The curious reader will find a clear and fair summary of what Castro said on this score on page 11 of the pamphlet.

Then he charges me with "overlooking" another statement by Castro ("I believe absolutely in Marxism, etc."). The answer is that Mr. McCarthy has done all the overlooking. Not only did I quote the four sentences he cites in full, but I put them in their proper context by quoting the much longer passage in which they appeared (page 11).

This is inexcusable carelessness on his part. One wonders how anyone could perpetrate it in the act of demonstrating his journalistic reliability.

The eleventh paragraph in Mr. McCarthy's letter tries to get away with some more sleight of hand. The original U.P.I. story stated: "He [Castro] referred again to his policy of keeping secret his belief in Marxism during the early days of the

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revolution and said: 'If it were known then that the men who led the guerrilla fighting had radical ideas, well, all those who are making war against us now would have started it right then."

I gave Castro's actual words—which were not at all like those in the quotation above, though the sense was related—and I observed that they were not *preceded* by anything resembling a reference to any "policy of keeping secret, etc." (p. 12). Now, Mr. McCarthy triumphantly cites a passage referring to a later situation to justify the "secrecy" part of the U.P.I. version. The trouble is that this passage ("We knew what a revolutionary programme was, etc.") came long *after* the quotation it was supposed to lead into ("'If it were known then, etc.'"). In fact, a few thousand words separated them.

This juggling with quotations is at this late date indefensible. But even if Mr. McCarthy's prize passage had come immediately before and not long after the quotation it was supposed to relate to, it would still not say what he thinks it said. Castro quite deliberately used the word "revolutionary" in more than one sense. In a general way, it is true that he was a revolutionary even in his university days. He was then a member of the *Unión Insurreccional Revolucionaria* (U.I.R.), a rival of the Communist student group. At the same time, he was on friendly terms with individual Communists, *Ortodoxos*, and non-party student politicians. In those formative years, he preferred to have several irons in the fire.

It is an elementary fact of the Cuban—and Latin-American—tradition that "revolutionary" is not synonomous with "Marxist" or "Marxist-Leninist." Castro used this play on words like "revolutionary" and "Marxist" to blur his past, and Mr. McCarthy seems completely unaware that they cannot or should not be used interchangeably.

As for "snips and pieces," mine served to show how tricky and complex an operation Castro's speech was. The U.P.I.'s "snips and pieces" were designed to show how simple-minded and one-tracked the speech was. Obviously neither of us could give the full five-hour speech, but there is a world of difference between trying to illustrate its full meaning, with all of its contradictions and ambiguities, and trying to oversimplify it to the point of misrepresentation.

Curiously, Mr. McCarthy has nothing to say about the actual misquotations, which I went to some trouble to document, in the U.P.I.'s "snips and pieces." Even if he were not so maladroit in every other respect, this silence is his confession.

THEODORE DRAPER

New York City

International Psychopath

A MEETING which I had with Donald Hume four weeks after his release in 1958 gives me the impression that the authors of the article in your May issue were right in thinking that he might at the time have developed his constructive instincts if he had been helped.

Hume had written to the head office of *Der Spiegel*, a German weekly, of which I am the London correspondent, vaguely offering interesting information. When I approached him, he indicated that he had met Klaus Fuchs, the atom spy, in prison, and that he wanted to tell us about him.

At his suggestion, I met him one morning at a Lyons coffee house in Knightsbridge, not exactly a suitable venue for anyone indulging in "expensive tastes" which Mr. Victor Sims later ascribed to him. He refused everything except coffee and biscuits. He was very modestly dressed.

He gave me a fairly long manuscript in which he had set down what he could remember about Fuchs. We discussed it at length, as I wanted to discover whether his information, which disclosed much of genuine interest about the working of Fuchs's mind, could be trusted. According to Hume, he had met Fuchs in Wormwood Scrubs, and afterwards again in Wakefield prison. Fuchs had been friendly to him, and occasionally they had had talks of five or six hours a day.

All this was not one of those flights of fancy to which he was addicted, as we now know. In an interview given in Berlin after his release, Fuchs confirmed his acquaintance with Hume, though he apparently did not cherish it.

There was no boasting on Hume's part at our meeting. He claimed to have supplied Fuchs with cigarettes and chocolate and to have provided him with newspapers and books. He rather prided himself that on one occasion he succeeded in procuring for Fuchs, contrary to prison regulations, a copy of Mr. Alan Moorehead's book *The Traitors*, which dealt, *inter alia*, with Fuchs. In return Fuchs discussed his affairs with him, taught him something about atomic science, and occasionally played chess with him. He described their relationship almost as that of master and servant; for the latter part Hume, with his appearance of a Sancho Panza, seemed well fitted. He also made the interesting assertion, in an aside, that Fuchs had rekindled in him his old interest in Communism.

In order to establish his trustworthiness, I put Hume some leading questions which he answered satisfactorily. He said repeatedly that all he wanted was a quiet, ordinary life. He was through with crime. Women did not interest him. He wished for a job as an electrician, with bridge-playing in his leisure time. Indeed, after our talk which lasted almost two hours, I took him to the Ideal Home Exhibition where he meant to study new electrical appliances.

On that occasion I certainly discovered no "snarling wolf" of which Mr. Sims has subsequently written. His eyes were restless, but otherwise he behaved and spoke as any normal intelligent citizen. There was only one thing I disliked in the course of our conversation. Hume said: "Fleet Street is pursuing me to confess that I had murdered Setty, and I am offered a huge fee. I could not be prosecuted a second time, you know. But I have not yet made up my mind whether to confess or not." He pronounced the word "confess" in a curious manner, as if he were putting it in quotation marks. He obviously wanted to convey the impression that if he chose to "confess," he might be "confessing" to a crime he had never

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The Djilas Case

London

IT IS *with deep distress that we have noted the re-arrest of Milovan Djilas. We find it regrettable that a writer's theoretical and historical remarks should be taken as an embarrassment to Yugoslavia. What is embarrassing to Yugoslavia in the eyes of free men everywhere is the arbitrary imprisonment of one of Yugoslavia's most distinguished citizens for normal literary activities. We strongly appeal for a reconsideration of the actions against Djilas and petition for his release. We can only hope that the sympathies in world opinion which Yugoslavia has over the years been gaining will not continue to be overshadowed by this unfortunate, incomprehensible incident.*

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A. ALVAREZ
A. J. AYER
JOHN BEAVAN
MAX BELOFF
ANTHONY WEDGWOOD BENN
NORMAN BIRNBAUM
ROBERT BOLT
MARK BONHAM CARTER
JOHN BRAINE
FENNER BROCKWAY
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ANDREW SHONFIELD
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WAYLAND YOUNG

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Rome

To: *Marshal Tito,*
Belgrade, Yugoslavia

THE *re-arrest of Milovan Djilas, on the grounds of his activities as a writer, has strongly stirred Italian public opinion. May we express our wish for his release.*

ITALO CALVINO
CARLO CASSOLA
NICOLA CHIAROMONTE
ALBERTO MORAVIA
FERRUCCIO PARRI
SALVATORE QUASIMODO
IGNAZIO SILONE
GIUSEPPE UNGARETTI
ELIO VITTORINI

New Delhi

WE HAVE *been pained to learn of the re-arrest of Milovan Djilas on April 7th in Belgrade, barely fourteen months after his release from prison—presumably because of his projected book,* Conversations with Stalin. *We are constrained to observe that this action cannot but damage the international image of the Yugoslav Government. We earnestly appeal to the Yugoslav Government and to Marshal Tito in particular, to set free Milovan Djilas who is an eminent European intellectual and has been a great Yugoslav statesman.*

G. G. GADGIL
C. RAJAGOPALACHARI
ABDU SAYEED AYYUB
ACHARYA J. B. KRIPALANI
A. D. GORWALA
FRANK MORAES
DAYA KRISHNA
RAMSINGH
NISSIM EZEKIEL
B. BUDDHADEVA BOSE
K. K. SINHA
AMLAN DATTA
MULK RAJ ANAND

New York

The protest message in the U.S.A. was signed by:

RALPH ELLISON
NORMAN MAILER
LIONEL TRILLING
HANNAH ARENDT
BERNARD MALAMUD
ALFRED KAZIN
SAUL BELLOW
DWIGHT MACDONALD
THORNTON WILDER
ROBERT LOWELL
JOHN CROWE RANSOM
ROBIE MACAULEY
MARIANNE MOORE
ROBERT PENN WARREN
ELIZABETH HARDWICK
ALLEN TATE

committed, in order to secure the fee, realising that the law could not reach him. The idea was repulsive, but perhaps understandable in view of Fleet Street's bait dangling before his eyes.

As far as our own business was concerned, it was easily settled a few days later. Hume let our paper have the German rights to his information on Fuchs for a very moderate sum, "chicken-feed" by comparison with the fee paid for his "Confession" later. He also re-sold his information on Fuchs to the *Daily Express*, as he told me, for a relatively small sum. At that stage he was apparently not yet thinking in the "grand" way which later must have contributed to his new crimes.

Of course I was horrified by his later actions, but I was sorry for the little man in the shabby suit who had wished—genuinely, I think, at that stage—to sell electric fires and play bridge. I cannot help thinking that a human chance had been tragically missed.

H. G. ALEXANDER

London

IN THEIR ARTICLE in your May issue, Messrs. Playfair and Sington write that:

> "The judges seldom, if ever, invoke their powers of committal under the Mental Health Act when people successfully plead 'diminished responsibility' to a charge of murder and hence are convicted only of manslaughter."

This is a serious understatement. Since the Mental Health Act came into force there have been 43 cases in which diminished responsibility has been the principal or the only defence to a charge of murder. In 15—that is to say in more than a third of these—hospital orders under the Mental Health Act were made by the court. These facts were given by Earl Bathurst in reply to a question of mine on this subject in the House of Lords on 22nd February last.

BARBARA WOOTTON

House of Lords

The Press

MR. THEODORE DRAPER'S interesting and effective rebuttal of Mr. Herbert Matthews's Cuban despatches in the *New York Times* implies that such misinterpretation is unusual in that weighty and famous newspaper. This is far from being the case. Walter Duranty's despatches from Moscow in the 'thirties were in a like vein. He systematically and grossly distorted the true state of affairs in the U.S.S.R. at that time, the more effectively because his despatches were prominently featured and editorially approved. They played, indeed, an appreciable part in procuring American recognition, and in sowing in Roosevelt's mind the disastrous misconceptions which led to Yalta and the present nuclear nightmare. It is as illusory to suppose that serious newspapers are more objective and

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truthful than frivolous ones as that morris dancers are chaster than rock-and-rollers. The London *Times* led the field in faking the news from the Third Reich, and then, by way of compensation, performed similar gyrations in its post-war reporting from Eastern and Central Europe. Again, Mr. Isaac Deutscher, so brilliantly and devastatingly anatomised in the latest issue of *Survey*, has appeared at different times in the columns of the *Guardian*, the *Observer*, and the *Sunday Times* rather than those of the *Mirror*, the *News of the World*, and the *People*. He has orbited in the upper reaches of journalism, not in the lower depths. It would seem to me that Mr. Matthews's Cuban performance in the *New York Times*, far from being out-of-the-way, was entirely typical.

MALCOLM MUGGERIDGE

Robertsbridge,
Sussex

F. R. Leavis

GEORGE STEINER's interesting essay on F. R. Leavis [ENCOUNTER, May] deserves comment on two scores.

First, although I believe Mr. Steiner correct in most of what he asserts, I still wonder if he has been sufficiently serious (to use another of Mr. Leavis's favourite words) in placing Leavis in the modern critical scene. Mr. Steiner's capsule descriptions of the work of Messrs. Blackmur, Ransom, and Tate are accurately glib, but his failure to mention the accomplishments of a major American critic like Yvor Winters seems specially unfortunate because there are numerous similarities of sensibility, method, and taste shared by the two men. Moreover, there are important ways in which Winters has anticipated Leavis. What Leavis attempted to do with the English novel in *The Great Tradition*, Winters succeeded in doing in his essays on the English poetic tradition; and he is perhaps the only critic of any note who has scrutinised carefully some of the chic poetic fashions which Leavis himself helped to establish—*i.e.*, Eliot's critical views and poetic practices; the metaphysical poets; Hopkins; the late novels of James, to name but a few.

Secondly, although I agree with Mr. Steiner that the Leavis attack on Snow was nasty and ill-tempered, I'm still not sure that it went completely awry. Leavis might have concentrated his fire on one small area of Leviathan's body, but he chose to scatter grape-shot. Some day, when somebody takes the trouble to examine where each of the individual pellets have lodged, it will probably be demonstrable that the beast was actually wounded.

In closing may I simply add that I'm not sure how our knowledge of Leavis has been improved by some of Mr. Steiner's pretty but non-informative sentences. What, for example, is one supposed to gain from the second of these sentences:

> After Prufrock and the first Pound and Eliot essays, it was becoming increasingly difficult to regard Tennyson or Swinburne as the sole or pre-eminent forces directing English poetry. A colder air was blowing.

RICHARD M. ELMAN

New York City

AUTHORS

Irving Howe *writes of himself:* "I was born in New York City in 1920 and grew up, as a boy, during the years of the depression and political radicalism. In my early 'teens I plunged into a number of socialist and left-wing groups; and while no longer involved with any organisation or committed to orthodox Marxism, I remain a socialist, editing the quarterly *Dissent*. In 1940 I graduated from New York's City College (a classmate of Mel Lasky) and after the war began to write literary criticism. (I had written a good deal of radical journalism before that.)... My work has fallen into two groups: one on political-social themes, such as a book (with B. J. Widick) on the United Automobile Workers and a critical history (with Lewis Coser) of the American Communist Party; and the other on literary themes, such as a critical biography of Sherwood Anderson, a critical study of William Faulkner, and *Politics and the Novel*. I have also done some writing on Yiddish literature.... Somewhere amid all this there is, I hope, a unifying principle, but in a note of this kind it would be pretentious to say what that is.... The article on Edith Wharton is a condensed version of an introduction to a volume of essays by various hands about her work, to be published this fall by Prentice-Hall...."

Vladimir Nabokov's article, which is published here in somewhat abridged form, is part of a copious commentary to his translation of Pushkin's *Eugene Onegin*, a work in several volumes to be published in the Bollingen Series within the next year.

Photographs in this number by **Heinz Köster** (Berlin).

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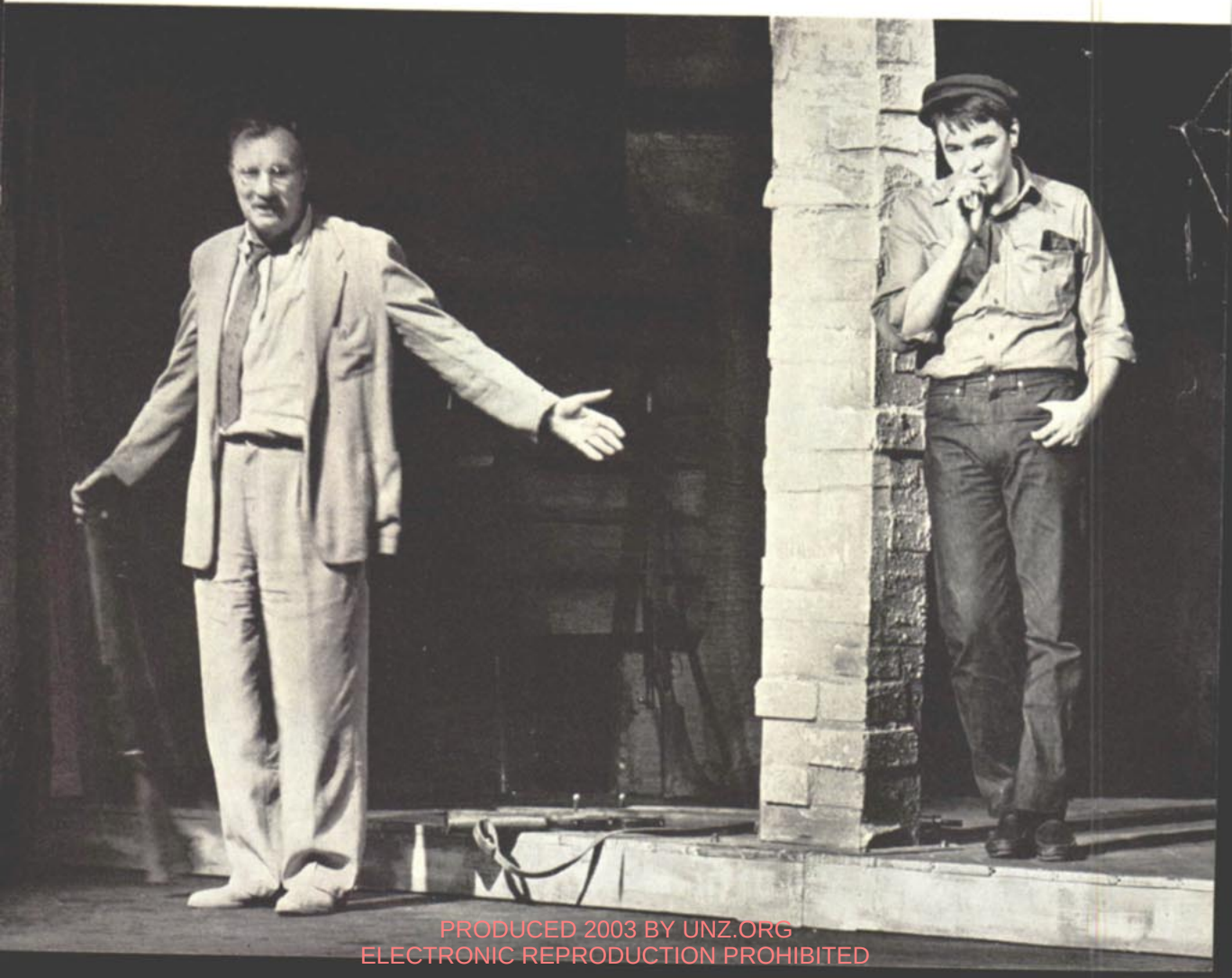
ABOVE — *Final scene in the West-Berlin Schiller-Theater production: director, Fritz Kortner.*

BELOW — *The school-teacher (Martin Held) and Andri (Klaus Kammer).*



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Its teeth could give a nasty bite,
And harm could come from both.
So when Milady said, Begone
And darken not my door,
Her Swain sought con-so-la-tion
In Guinness at "The Boar".
'Twas here that later he was told
Of his successor who
Had by the beast been roughly mauled.
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